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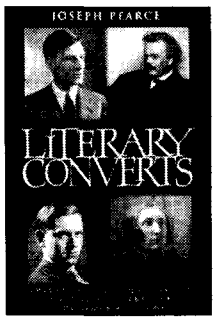

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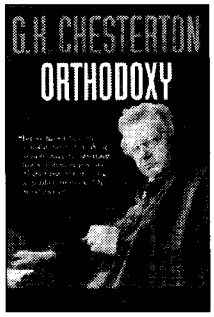

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Richard John Neuhaus

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The Challenges of Ecumenism

As an ELCA Lutheran I share James Nuechterlein's concerns in his "Ecumenical Conundrums" (March). I'm not sure I can agree with Pope John Paul II that the present institutional expression of the faith in some thirty-six thousand denominations worldwide is scandalous and weakens "the voice of the gospel." Unless I'm mistaken, the voice of the gospel is God's own and has the power to create faith in those who hear it. Perhaps God is less concerned with having one authoritative structural "voice" in control of the broadcasting of the gospel and more concerned with getting a hearing wherever and whenever His servants actually focus on loving unbelievers enough to proclaim and live the gospel in their presence.

Believers are being made every minute all over the world because the Holy Spirit, the gospel, and sinners are a volatile mix that no single earthly structure can contain. The Book of Acts and missionary history testify to that. The harder modern ecumenists try to squeeze everyone into one mold, the more eruptions of this mixture will escape between their fingers.

(The Rev.) Jeffrey A. Stoopes
Grace Lutheran Church
Pembine, Wisconsin

Predictably, the local ecumenical service that James Nuechterlein described did not limit itself wherever possible to what virtually all Christians through the centuries and across the globe agree upon. Instead, it thumbed its nose at a huge majority of Christians by prominently featuring something entirely unknown or prohibited throughout the City of God outside the tiny ghetto of late-twentieth-century liberal Protestantism—a clergywoman. The substantive issue is not the gender of the minister but the overarching authority recognized by the sponsors of the service.

Submission to the ecumenical mandate requires, first and foremost, recognition of some authority that has the right to issue difficult mandates. Thus, true ecumenists seek agreement on whether Scripture, tradition, ecumenical councils, or Peter's successor have the highest claim to speak for Christ. An ecumenical service ought either to acknowledge up front which particular ordering of those sources it recognizes as the voice of the Shepherd (and let those who disagree participate as observers), or else limit itself to those things that all four voices agree upon.

All four voices, for example, call for unity in the Church, providing the impetus for ecumenism in the first place. At the same time, they all speak against the ordination of women. Therefore, an ecumenical service presided over by a woman, no matter how uplifting or orthodox her message, necessarily militates against true ecumenism, because clergywomen can only exist where the "sufficiently leftward politics" that Mr. Nuechterlein views so dubiously is the highest spokesman for Christ in the Church. Such leftward politics prevails wherever natural knowledge of God wrongly trumps revealed knowledge, allowing reason and conscience, warped by total separation from fixed truths, to have veto power over revelation in matters of doctrine.

Having intentionally erased the only useful thing about denominations—the delineation of internally coherent confessions of faith flowing from particular orderings of revealed authority—typical ecumenical servic-

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es go on to reinforce the primary danger of denominationalism by cultivating the attitude that *our* view of authority (in this case that of late-twentieth-century liberal Protestants and their Catholic sympathizers) is the one that really counts. Thus, they can offer nothing other than what Mr. Nuechterlein calls an "incoherent hodgepodge" of a service that serves no purpose other than to make those in attendance feel open-minded, which in turn only serves the very un-ecumenical goal of jettisoning revealed truth as the norm of Christian reason, conscience, and ultimately, doctrine.

Those who put on such services tend to view their church bodies' nominal authorities, generally either the Bible or the Pope, as stumbling blocks in the way of progress. Not coincidentally, such ecumenists are also the only Christians in history who regularly fail to see abortion and homosexual conduct as sinful. Participating in the rigidly sectarian "ecumenism" that these services offer does not prove that one loves one's brothers and sisters in Christ; it only makes the ecumenical conundrum worse.

(The Rev.) Peter A. Speckhard
Faith Lutheran Church
Green Bay, Wisconsin

Thanks to James Nuechterlein for his commentary—brief, incisive, caring.

Another commentary on ecumenism, brief, incisive, and flip, came in the form of a cartoon some years ago. The cartoon showed a church with its doors wide open and a nearby sign reading, "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity." Through the doors a column of clergy were making their exit in pairs. The first wore a miter and carried a bishop's staff; his partner wore a clergy suit and clerical collar. Next: a clergyman with a very tweedy jacket; his partner, female, was still singing heartily. Next: a clergyman wearing shorts and what might have been beach attire; and so on.

At the head of the recessional, the bishop with the staff says to his partner, "See you next year!"

E. Earl Anderson
Waterloo Lutheran Seminary
Waterloo, Ontario
Canada

Who's Got That Swing?

Re Hugh Liebert, "It Ain't Got That Swing," March: In 1998, social critic and jazz fan Martha Bayles, the author of *Hole in Our Soul: The Loss of Beauty and Meaning in American Popular Music*, wrote a wonderful piece about jazz for the *Public Interest*. In the introduction, Bayles reminded readers that in 1939 the great jazz saxophonist Coleman Hawkins recorded his now-classic take on "Body and Soul," and that the piece was dismissed by both the left and the right. To the right, wrote Bayles, jazz "was considered a violation of traditional musical standards committed for the basest of motives." On the left, jazz was seen as "the shameless commercialization of a once-authentic folk music or, in the highbrow anti-Stalinist opinion of *Partisan Review*, as kitsch: cheap, disposable, and derivative of genuine art, which it threatened to cannibalize."

More than sixty years later, we have an interesting amalgamation of these two ideas. In Hugh Liebert's piece about swing and my book *If It Ain't Got That Swing: The Rebirth of Grown-Up Culture* (Mr. Liebert slyly omitted my subtitle, which helps shore up his argument that my book is about music and not culture), we have a conservative who thinks that jazz is art—well, kind of, that is to say, certain kinds of jazz, even though it could be in a base way that may be insulting to God, even if it is nonetheless good for "the common man" (!)—and that rock and roll is trash.

I've been fighting this battle with conservatives ever since I became a serious Catholic, and I always find myself circling back to the same thing: whether it's Gershwin, Ellington, the Beatles, the neo-swing band Indigo Swing, or the new Radiohead album I bought last month, much of pop music is art. To claim otherwise by retreating into political stances or making a demarcation between genres—or, in Mr. Liebert's case, making demarcations within demarcations by banishing all neo-swing from the garden of swing-era swing—is just silly hairsplitting. It's also against our God-given instincts. When we hear a great song or symphony, we experience a joy, a swelling-up, that I believe is religious in nature. We are hearing something beautiful that touches us deeply and elevates our senses and spirit. Genre doesn't matter, sound does. Further, saying, as Mr. Liebert does, that we run the risk of worshiping music rather than God in doing so is like saying we shouldn't go to church services because we run the risk of worshiping the church building.

But then, Mr. Liebert doesn't seem too concerned about the facts. He claims that because I make a connection between Elvis and swing—anyone with ears can do the same thing—and call the Beatles brilliant musicians, I advance the notion that "rock bears a close resemblance to swing." In my book I make exactly the opposite argument, noting that much of rock went sour in the 1960s when it lost its connection to American popular music.

What I didn't do, and should have done, is to have been much kinder to modern popular music, which began with the Beatles and continues to produce art. Mr. Liebert calls today's popular music "blues-driven, power chord dependent noise that today's ten-year-olds can play after a few weeks of guitar lessons." This is just, excuse me, dumb. Has Mr. Liebert ever heard the song "One" by the Irish—and Christian—band U2? I doubt any ten-year-old, even a ten-year-old Mozart, could have written it. It is unspeakably grand, has no connection with the blues that I can

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see (as is the case with most post-Beatles pop music), and has some lyrics ("You say love is a temple / Love the higher law / You ask me to enter / And then you make me crawl") that can make one glad that the strict moon/swoon conventions of swing-era lyrics were tossed out.

Of course, Mozart wouldn't have written "One," and there's another rub. As Martha Bayles pointed out in her article, classical music and popular music or rock and roll are different animals. Comparing them is like comparing painting and sculpture. As Terry Teachout once noted, Ellington and classical composer Aaron Copland "are both masters of American music, each in their own way." Ellington and the Beatles—and, yes, the gifted young rock band we'll hear about next week—are all masters of American popular music, each in their own way. Conservatives know this in their hearts like a natural law—come on, the Supremes don't make your heart sing?—and they should stop forcing themselves to switch the station when "She Loves You" comes on. Sit back and enjoy it.

A couple more small things. Mr. Liebert claims that my view that "swing is the first fad that has kids looking to grandparents and traditional rules for what's hip" is "tenuous at best." Okay. What other pop fad that predated swing had kids looking to grandparents? The hula hoop? Mr. Liebert also says that I "wax nostalgic for the bygone communitarian paradise in which swing first emerged." Good heavens, haven't conservatives won this argument? Haven't we proved, with books like *The Lost City*—and, ahem, mine—that the past was more complicated than the ready-made chimera the left offers up of repressed housewives and gray-suited drones? I was surprised to see this cliché advanced in FIRST THINGS.

Mark Gauvreau Judge
Potomac, Maryland

Congratulations on Hugh Liebert's "It Ain't Got That Swing."

There are, however, a few important points that Mr. Liebert left unexplored. He quoted Richard Weaver rightly as having said: "In swing one hears a species of music in which the performer is at fullest liberty to express himself as an egoist." Mr. Liebert gives partial credence to this false notion by saying: "No jazz musician plays for the greater glory of God, nor any universal idea."

This is a profound misconception, which I fear is rather widely held. Jazz does not presume to begin with God; instead it arrives at the divine with a particular sort of humility. Man has inflicted much suffering on his own kind by the reverse presumption—that he can know God outside the quotidian context of this existential life. Jazz is first existential. It deals with that which is the case for mankind, and begins by redeeming each man to every other. This is an idea held to be universal even in the age of the pre-Socratics.

Secondly, jazz emerges within, projects, demands, and embodies freedom. This is the extent to which it is political. Yet, in one respect it is inherently Christian, since its overriding demand is submission. The solo performer plays within a cycle of risk, open to all challenges—including humiliation by some unknown artist. And when, indeed, he succeeds at this, he is certainly heroic, but that is tempered by the inevitable truth of tomorrow, and tomorrows to come. In this sense he is not triumphal because he is aware of his limitations of age, time, and death. John Coltrane was the apotheosis of this sentiment, which is both biblical and Greek.

Mr. Liebert is right to suggest that "art detached from transcendental ends is decadent." I do not believe, however, that anticipating or desiring an audience limits the transcendent impulse. Beethoven, whose art may be the highest human expression of the divine, not only obsessed about audience, he was inspired by the mundane events of everyday life.

T. S. Eliot wrote more on these questions than any modern. His criterion for art was that it address something external to and larger than itself. Jazz then has a double discipline: the chords and harmonies within, and the fellow performers and audience without—and in its apparent apostasy embodies a sensuous universality long absent in American Christianity.

Gilbert N. M. O. Morris
George Mason University
Fairfax, Virginia

I am utterly baffled by Hugh Liebert's somewhat abstruse concept of a political divide between conservatives and swing, jazz, call it what you will, relying, it seems, on the painful antagonism of someone like Miles Davis for support. It is a fringe argument, utter nonsense on its face, particularly when one considers that young conservatives are mainly in thrall to rock and roll (Bill Bennett, Fred Barnes, Rush Limbaugh) while the old fogies, both left and right, if musically oriented at all, are still pining for the Barnets, the Basies, the Goodmans, and the Millers. Mr. Liebert, I would hope, will think over this eccentric premise and give it the heave-ho.

As to his other assertions, I must say, with all due respect, that Duke Ellington's songs were not necessarily among the most popular of the period, nor were they, in everyone's view, always that fetching. Brilliant as he was, he was not the apotheosis of American songwriters. There is a body of music produced in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s bulging with breathtakingly beautiful songs by Vernon Duke, Harold Arlen, Arthur Schwartz, Gershwin, Berlin, Cole Porter (whom Mr. Liebert mentions in passing), and many others. Mr. Liebert's reference, by the way, to "The Way You Look Tonight," without composer attribution, as a "jazz classic" was enough to set the teeth on edge. It was a ballad, and a stunning one, by Jerome Kern.

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Oscar Peterson did a marvelous uptempo "jazzy" version in his *Jerome Kern Songbook*. Bing Crosby and wife Dixie Lee leave one misty-eyed with their little-known recording. It can be performed variously. But it is in its musical core cast in an Americanized European structure.

There happen, in fact, to be a number of slow, limpid songs that have indeed become jazz classics by virtue of a particular performance. Artie Shaw's rendition of "Indian Love Call," a song originally as sedately operatic as possible, is an outstanding example. Basically, one gets the feeling that none of those, with some notable exceptions, who are younger than seventy-seven know enough yet to express valid opinions on the subject.

Elliot West
Post Mills, Vermont

I greatly appreciated reading Hugh Liebert's opinion piece. As a twenty-something myself, I share his discriminating skepticism regarding "neo-swing," which already seems to have run its course and is fading fast from the pop scene.

But I was puzzled that his discussion of jazz and its (as conservatively criticized) apparent lack of spirituality failed to mention the strong undercurrent of religious themes in jazz music. One of the widely accepted masterpieces of jazz, John Coltrane's "A Love Supreme," set forth as its sole purpose to give praise to the Creator. I have rarely been moved more in religious meditation than when listening to Coltrane's band chant "a love supreme, a love supreme . . ." Moreover, a substantial amount of Ellington's work articulates profound religious themes. (I recall attending Wynton Marsalis' Ellington tour a few years ago, when he played his sacred piece "The Shepherd," moving the well-educated, relatively affluent audience to an exhilarating religious fervor.) If Mr. Liebert was attempting a criticism of the conservative perspective on this point, he missed the most obvious point of contention. Perhaps, here, he agrees with the conservatives he criticizes.

In which case, he's overlooking the diversity of the jazz genre. Of course, jazz generally speaking is not a sacred art form. But then again, neither is classical music since Mozart. And the case could be made that composers like Mozart and Wagner were as "decadent" as Miles Davis and Count Basie.

Travis J. Scholl
Lutheran Hour Ministries
St. Louis, Missouri

Hugh Liebert replies:
Mr. Morris is right to stress how humility and submission are closely linked to the freedom embodied in jazz. The freedom of a virtuoso jazz soloist also presupposes a certain submission insofar as a jazz musician must attain considerable skill *before* soloing well. Critics often say that jazz music is merely emotive and therefore undemanding—indeed, jazz musicians who do not give themselves enough credit often support such a misunderstanding. Mr. Morris is right to note that this is not so.

I did not argue that desiring an audience as such limits the "transcendent impulse." In Christian ages, something like a transcendent impulse is required for winning an audience. In secular times, however, this is not the case. Modern musicians' desire for an audience does, I think, limit the religiosity of their music, or at least there are strong pressures to appeal to an audience's less pious impulses.

Both Mr. Morris and Mr. Scholl mention John Coltrane as an example of a jazz musician who plays for the greater glory of God. This is an excellent point, which calls our attention to the diversity of the jazz genre, as Mr. Scholl suggests. However, Coltrane's appeal to transcendent ideas is not of the same nature as the transcendence of, say, Handel. In Christian ages public life—including public art, like music—is more easily oriented towards higher ends. An audience accustomed to enjoying meaningful music within a world largely ordered with regard to the same ideas and emotions expressed in that music must be somewhat different than any of Coltrane's audiences, which are necessarily composed of modern men and women. Coltrane can—and does—express transcendent impulses, of course, but they are nevertheless different from those of previous forms of music. As Mr. Morris suggests, the same might be said of more or less all classical music since Mozart, not only jazz.

Mr. West notes that there are other great jazz musicians besides Duke Ellington. I couldn't agree more. My article focused on Ellington due to my taste for the virtuoso soloing of the Swing Era. This is not limited to Ellington, but his band (with such greats as Johnny Hodges, Paul Gonsalves, and Clark Terry, to name a few) exemplified this aspect of jazz more than great musicians like Gershwin or Cole Porter. I take exception to Mr. West's claim that one must be at least seventy-seven years old to write about the Swing Era; thankfully, the essence of that era was preserved on record.

Mr. West calls my claim that conservatives have never adequately appreciated swing "utter nonsense on its face." On this point, Mr. West misunderstands my argument. Of course many contemporary conservative "fogies" pine for swing (although Mark Judge hardly qualifies as a "fogy"). But their pining is insufficient to the extent that they fail to recognize the genuine quality of swing *music*. They like jazz simply because it is old or because its lyrics tend to be preferable to those of Snoop Doggy Dogg. This is how, for example, Robert Bork praises jazz in *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*. Swing music is unique because it is both popular and high, but to understand the latter one must address the music itself.

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In my article, I claimed that Mark Judge failed to do this; based on his letter, I see no reason to amend this argument. Mr. Judge is of course right to speak fondly in his book of communities like Shaw in Washington, D.C.—such communities are indeed preferable, as he notes, to the suburbs. But New Urbanism does not quite capture what makes jazz great (and as far as I know, prior to Judge's book it never claimed to do so).

At the beginning of his letter, Mr. Judge claims that my article is an amalgamation of two dismissals of jazz. This could not be more contrary to the spirit of my article, an obvious defense of swing. I did not write that swing was "insulting to God," merely that most jazz does not call forth the same emotions as the music of Christian ages. I did not write that jazz is "good for 'the common man,'" merely that common men rather enjoyed swing, to swing's credit. Nor did I argue that Mr. Judge's book is "about music and not culture"; on the contrary, I think that his book is almost oblivious to swing *music* and focuses on *culture* entirely too much.

Later in his letter, Mr. Judge takes issue with my doubt that neo-swing has kids looking to their grandparents to learn what's hip. Since the Swing Era ended around 1945, the last group of Americans to spend a significant amount of time as members of a swing dancing, record buying public were born in the early 1920s. Today, that generation is pushing eighty—which is to say, the last living link to the Swing Era is largely deceased. Today's kids would have to ask their *great*-grandparents to tap memories of swing's salad days. This distance from the Swing Era is all too evident in the neo-swing movement Mr. Judge favors.

More important than Mr. Judge's misunderstanding of my argument is his insistence on a sort of musical democratization: "Genre doesn't matter," he writes, "sound does." This is fine as far as it goes—there are certainly some recent pop songs that are quite good, as Mr. Judge notes. Classical music, jazz, and rock are *not* "different animals" in at least one important sense—they are all forms of music. Each calls forth certain emotions and lends itself to certain virtues. Today's pop music favors a half-hearted rebelliousness or an ugly lust (with exceptions, of course). Early rock did much of the same, though without the maliciousness of Mick Jagger and everything that followed. Jazz is considerably more ennobling, even while being popular (due to records and radio) in a way classical music never could be. This is why jazz is great. Conservatives like Mark Judge, who insist on equalizing genres and are reluctant to discuss swing music itself, only obscure this greatness, even while appearing to praise it.

Getting Locke and Jefferson Right

In his review of *A New Birth of Freedom* (March), George McKenna criticizes Harry V. Jaffa on at least two points. First, Mr. McKenna believes Jaffa is not careful enough to distinguish Locke's thought from the Founding:

> Surprisingly, for such a noted student of Leo Strauss, Jaffa seems to assume that Locke fits smoothly into the natural law tradition of Western thought. But in *Natural Right and History* Strauss made a convincing case that Locke's "state of nature" represented a radical break with the tradition and brought him closer to Thomas Hobbes.

Mr. McKenna makes a common mistake in reading the Hobbesian Locke into the Founding. This has the effect of claiming the Founders read Locke as a moral relativist. There is no such evidence. Just because Strauss found Hobbes in Locke does not mean the Founding Fathers did. This is the essential point Jaffa makes in his essay "The American Founding as the Best Regime," but it can also be inferred from his chapter on the Declaration of Independence in *Crisis of the House Divided*. More pointedly, Jaffa explicitly denounces such an interpretation in his review of Allan Bloom's *Closing of the American Mind* (*Interpretation*, Fall 1988).

> No one has maintained more persistently than I have . . . the importance in the American Founding of Locke's teaching. . . . But to say that a radical atheism discovered in Locke's esoteric teaching was part of what they understood, believed, and incorporated into their regime—when every single document bearing on the question contradicts it, and there is not a shred of evidence to support it—is just plain crazy.

While there is no evidence for Mr. McKenna's interpretation of a Hobbesian Locke, there is evidence that the Founders despised Hobbes. Both James Wilson and Alexander Hamilton regarded his doctrine as "repugnant," "absurd," and "impious." Their low opinion of Hobbes is in contrast to their high opinion of human ends.

Second, Mr. McKenna asserts that Jefferson "pioneered in the same crackpot scientism, the same methodology for treating some people as less than fully human, that Jaffa rightly deplores in Calhoun and Stephens." Jefferson certainly did not subscribe to "the same" science. While Jefferson may have held that certain characteristics of blacks were wanting, he never questioned their humanity. Jefferson did not even intimate, unlike John C. Calhoun and Alexander Stephens, that blacks should be enslaved "for their own benefit." Nor did he disinherit them from salvation as Stephens and Jefferson Davis did when they likened the slaves to the cursed race of Canaan, thus making

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them "fitted for that condition which [they occupy] in our system."

It is true that Jefferson recognized the slaves as "inferior," but in the same "Query" (number 14) from the *Notes on the State of Virginia* from which Mr. McKenna quotes, Jefferson does not assert that they have lost their rights as a consequence. Rather, Jefferson speaks of a gradual emancipation, while also not ruling out that the slaves could catch up with their learned masters through education. Concerning the physical and mental differences, Jefferson's concerns were wholly practical. He had little hope that blacks and whites could live together after emancipation. Yet justice demanded it. In his 1820 letter to John Holmes—the famous "Fire Bell in the Night" letter—Jefferson lamented the rejection of the Founding by defenders of slavery: "If they would dispassionately weigh the blessings they will throw away against an abstract principle more likely to be effected by union than by scission, they would pause before they would perpetrate this act of suicide on themselves and of treason against the hopes of the world."

Jefferson never wavered in his devotion to that "abstract principle." The Declaration was a beacon of hope not to a few, but to all. In his 1826 letter to Roger Weightman, Jefferson stated explicitly that the principles emanating out of the Declaration "are the grounds of hope for others." These sentiments are so dissimilar from the opinions of such Confederate icons as Calhoun and Stephens that there is no rational connection between them.

Erik S. Root
John Locke Foundation
Raleigh, North Carolina

George McKenna replies:

In my review of Harry Jaffa's *A New Birth of Freedom* I noted that Jaffa brackets together a number of thinkers who in important respects were really quite different from one another. For example, Jaffa assumes that Locke and Jefferson fit comfortably into the medieval and classical tradition of natural law. Leo Strauss, I thought, rightly challenged that assumption. From this, Erik S. Root reads that I have branded Locke a "relativist"—and therefore also Jefferson, Hamilton, James Wilson, and all the other Founding Fathers. He goes on to show that the Founders were not in fact relativists. But since I never ventured to brand Locke a relativist in the first place, all the cars on Mr. Root's train seem to be proceeding without an engine.

What Strauss said, correctly, I think, is that Locke, like Hobbes before him, broke with the natural law tradition by denying that man is by nature a social and political animal, holding instead that man is naturally independent and once lived without government in a state of nature. This forces him into the fiction that all just government must originate in some primitive "contract." I don't think this amounts to relativism (Locke seems to have believed that some version of the contract was applicable to all times and places), but it certainly is a very different foundational concept than that of Aristotle or of the medieval natural law theorists, and it has very different implications for governance.

I regret leaving the impression that Thomas Jefferson denied the humanity of blacks. At times he came pretty close—as when, for example, he speculated that the preference of black men for white women over black women was analogous to "the preference of the Oranootan [sic] for the black women over those of his own species." But he never explicitly denied their humanity. So far as I am aware, neither did John C. Calhoun and Alexander Stephens. What all of them shared was a belief that blacks belonged to a lower order of humanity. This prejudice was widespread in the nineteenth century, but in the previous century it was Jefferson who was one of the first to give it the patina of objective "science." So, if we must arrange thinkers into contending armies, as Jaffa seems to do in his book, it is not so easy to decide where to put Jefferson. For the most part, I am sure, he belongs with the forces of light, but there is a dark side of Jefferson that cannot be ignored.

Proper Fraternal Reproof

David B. Hart's contribution to the symposium on "The Future of the Papacy" (March) deserves special commendation. He acknowledges gratefully how hard John Paul II has tried to span the distance separating the Eastern Church and the Roman Catholic Church. That the results have been disappointing must be a source of sorrow to the ailing Pontiff. Moreover, Mr. Hart expounds with clarity and sincerity the obstacles that lay in the path of a reconciliation. He seems to draw the conclusion that the moment has not yet come. The Kairos is not yet ripe. The obstacles are many and the solution lies not in human diplomacy, but will be the fruit of prayer, sacrifices, penance, and an ardent desire on both sides to mend a tragic separation.

But what I particularly appreciate is Mr. Hart's conviction that there are obstacles that the Latin Church could remove, obstacles that have no doubt increased the difficulty of reaching a fruitful dialogue between East and West. He deplores the desacralization of the Liturgy—"disfigured by rebarbative banality, by hymnody both insipid and heterodox, and by a style of worship that looks flippant if not blasphemous." Alas, this severe fraternal correction is justified: blasphemous masses have proliferated since Vatican II.

Mr. Hart charitably chides the Latin Church for not censuring theological heresies, thereby giving the impression that her faith has become pluralistic. "Academic theologians explicitly reject principles of Catholic orthodoxy, but are not (as they would be in the East) excluded from communion." These words—

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spoken in fraternal charity—are a clarion call for authorities in the Roman Catholic Church. Those truly faithful to the teaching of the Holy Catholic Church have suffered unspeakable anguish for the last forty years for the reasons bluntly stated by David Hart. Let us hope that the criticisms of an "outsider" will be gratefully received by those to whom they are addressed.

Alice von Hildebrand
New Rochelle, New York

What Makes a Just Wage Just

Stephen T. Worland's "Just Wages" (February)—as its title implies—tries to dismiss the suffering of American workers with a quick wave of a scholarly wand and a dash of discredited economic theories. Mr. Worland labels support for a higher minimum wage "class warfare." The minimum wage in this country has been falling rapidly for thirty years. It would have to be over $8 now, instead of $5.15, to restore it to its level of three decades ago. It would have to be much higher than that for many families to be able to afford housing. While income has remained the same or fallen for most Americans, the richest among us have seen their wealth skyrocket. The tax cuts for the wealthy now being planned in Washington constitute class warfare, but notice which class is being victimized.

Yes, victimized. Mr. Worland dismisses Marx's idea of surplus wealth as a myth. I dismiss Mr. Worland's argument as attacking a straw man. Has anyone proposed the elimination of profit? At most, some have proposed slicing a bit off the ever-growing profits of quite secure corporations. Meanwhile, such radical journals as *Business Week* and *Crain's* have admitted that living wages do not cause unemployment. On the contrary, in many cases they have reduced turnover and increased morale, productivity, and competition.

Mr. Worland not only ignores these facts. He ignores the entire problem of growing poverty and homelessness in the United States. The concept of a living wage, he tells us, belongs to the Catholic Church of a century ago, and may still be relevant in the Third World. But this is coopting a concept in order to kill it. The living wage movement, which columnist Robert Kuttner has called "the most exciting grassroots enterprise to emerge since the civil rights movement," has grown up in the United States over the past seven years, and for good reason.

Mr. Worland is, of course, right that it makes no sense for American factories in the Third World to pay high wages (especially since the same companies refuse to do so in America). But, again, few if any have argued to the contrary. Many, however, have argued that workers everywhere should be permitted to organize. This is how Pope John Paul II put it: "It is a fundamental right of workers to freely establish organizations to defend and promote their interests and to contribute in a responsible manner to the common task." Until union-busting of the sort engaged in by American corporations abroad—or by the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., for that matter—stops, all high-minded economic arguments for holding down incomes will remain laughable bunk.

Mr. Worland seems to think wages will go up when productivity does. Yet he remains oblivious to the glaring fact that productivity in the United States has shot up in recent decades, while wages have not.

Cardinal Roger Mahony has shown us an admirable example with his efforts on behalf of janitors in California. His is the path we should follow, not that of pseudo-academic apologists for oppression.

David Swanson
Orange, Virginia

Stephen T. Worland replies:
The "living wage movement" David Swanson refers to is mainly intended to protect workers employed by firms that contract with city and county governments. To understand such a movement it is important to keep in mind the crucial difference between public and private sector employment. Public sector employees can negotiate themselves a raise, and then use their political leverage to secure the taxes to pay for it. To provide moral cover for this procedure they can recall the memory of Pope Leo XIII and invoke the concept of "a living wage."

A private sector business firm has to meet payroll out of sales revenue. The cost of a wage increase cannot be covered by raising taxes. Because of the connection between sales revenue received and wages disbursed the firm cannot be required to pay more than what theologian Michael Naughton identifies as the "sustainable wage."

Too Cursory Dismissal

I was disappointed to read the rather cursory dismissal of Joseph Pearce's *Solzhenitsyn: A Soul in Exile* in the March issue of FIRST THINGS. The book in fact is a useful and important addition to the literature on Solzhenitsyn. Michael Scammell's massive 1984 biography contains much original research but is openly hostile to Solzhenitsyn's religious convictions and far from fair in reporting his fundamentally moderate political positions. Scammell's book is marked by an aggressively secularist, liberal academic bias. It is also far too long to be of much value to the ordinary reader. D. M. Thomas' well-written 1998 biography more accurately reports Solzhenitsyn's views but is marred by a bizarre Freudian interpretive framework. Pearce's more manageable biography provides little original research but has the merit of presenting a readable and quite accurate account of Solzhenitsyn's life and thought, one which sympathetically engages his deepest moral and political convictions. It is a good place to begin one's reading on Solzhenitsyn.

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Pearce does indeed go too far in assimilating Solzhenitsyn's views to those of E. F. Schumacher and G. K. Chesterton. But like them, Solzhenitsyn is a critic of industrial mass society and an advocate of decentralization, small-scale technology, and local self-government. There may be a touch of romanticism in these views, but they need to be thoughtfully engaged and not summarily dismissed.

The "one long interview" that Pearce is said to make "too much of" includes interesting details on Solzhenitsyn's life, reconsiderations of older writings and essays, a fascinating account of Solzhenitsyn's 1993 meeting with Pope John Paul II (on the fifteenth anniversary of the Pope's pontificate), as well as remarkable reflections on how the Church might come to terms with modernity without losing its soul. I found this material quite helpful as I completed my own soon to be published work on the "political philosophy" of Solzhenitsyn.

Pearce's book concludes with an Appendix that reproduces nine never before translated "prose poems" of Solzhenitsyn's that were originally published in Russia in 1997. These poems have an elegiac quality and thoughtfully deal with such subjects as nature, death, and the power of conscience against the backdrop of Russia's new "time of troubles." These alone are worth the price of admission.

Daniel J. Mahoney
Assumption College
Worcester, Massachusetts

More to the Story

Richard John Neuhaus would have been better served to have gathered all the facts before commenting on the controversy concerning Baylor University and Professor William A. Dembski (While We're At It, February). It is true that William Dembski was removed from the leadership of the academic unit formerly known as the Michael Polanyi Center. However, his removal was related to matters of internal relationships and not to his academic work. The fact remains that Bill Dembski is still a faculty member at Baylor University. The project known as Intelligent Design—among other projects related to science, the philosophy and history of science, and science and religion—continues. Dr. Bruce Gordon, a friend of Bill Dembski and also an advocate of Intelligent Design, is now the director.

Baylor University is indeed committed to a thoroughgoing integration of faith and learning and the implications for an academic institution of the confession, "Jesus is Lord." (See Thesis I of Father Neuhaus' superb essay, "The Christian University: Eleven Theses," first delivered at activities related to my inauguration, later printed in FIRST THINGS [January 1996], and discussed and analyzed every year by incoming students in the Baylor Interdisciplinary Core.)

Robert B. Sloan, Jr.
President
Baylor University
Waco, Texas

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This Time

The Stupid Party

James Nuechterlein

One of the reasons intelligent young people are drawn disproportionately to the left in politics is that they admire intellectuals and assume that intellectuals are smart not just about their own fields but about everything. And since intellectuals are predominantly left-wing in their politics, their smart young followers conclude that the smart place to locate themselves politically is on the left. The conclusion follows naturally from the assumption, but the assumption follows from nothing more substantial than the self-admiration of people who dabble in ideas.

The history of the last century suggests, in fact, that intellectuals as a class are not smart about politics at all. George Orwell caught much of the truth of the matter in his observation that certain ideas are so outrageous that only an intellectual could believe them. Who but an intellectual, after all, could build a system of political economy on the ideas in *Das Kapital*? Intellectuals are drawn to comprehensive utopian schemes because of their disdain for the ordinary and their sense that a satisfactory politics must be, like them, immensely clever. William F. Buckley, Jr. famously said that he would rather be governed by the first two thousand people in the Boston phone directory than by the faculty of Harvard University. Most sensible people would concur.

The point here is not essentially ideological. What makes intellectuals as a class politically stupid is not, or not simply, that they are leftists. (I have encountered more than a few politically stupid conservatives.) But at Harvard and elsewhere in the modern intellectual world, the left has generally predominated, and so most of the political lunacy emanating from intellectual circles has had a leftist cast. A great many intellectuals of the twentieth century, and many of the most distinguished, were drawn to Marxism; the few fascist intellectuals were virtually all second-rate crackpots.

What brings the subject to mind is an interview with the British playwright Harold Pinter in the March issue of the *Progressive*. (Pinter is, strictly speaking, more artist than intellectual. But his plays are noted, among other things, for their absurdist complexity, and he is the kind of artist often identified as an intellectual. He also speaks and writes frequently on political issues.) In the interview (conducted by Anne-Marie Cusac) Pinter discusses his plays with subtlety and care, concluding with the observation that "it's very complex, the world of our imagination, and human life is very, very complex." But then, immediately, this: "Political issues don't seem to me to be at all complex."

Pinter proceeds to demonstrate his noncomplex political worldview. "In the so-called democracies in which we live . . . we are mostly told lies. Or, where we are not told lies, we are told a lot of bull****. [There is a] complicity between government, business, and [the] media which few people care to contemplate. I think that the structures of power essentially treat people with contempt because that's the way they survive. But they say the opposite. They say, 'We love you.' . . . Even while they're torturing [people], they're saying, 'We love you.' Please trust us and rely upon us. . . . We're looking after your best interests by torturing you.'"

What kind of torture, the interviewer wonders. "All kinds of torture, including the torture . . . in American prisons. I'm not really saying that the United States would assert that they are looking after the best interests of the two million people in prison. But they would say that they are looking after the best interests of society. And they're not . . . by a very long stretch. They're doing something quite different. They are suppressing a great body of people . . . thousands upon thousands for obviously very minor offenses. . . . The proportion of black prisoners is extraordinary, and recently with the whole question of Florida, the number of black voters who are actually disenfranchised in a number of ways is quite eloquent, I think, as to what's going on in your country."

Pinter goes on in this fashion at some length about a great many issues. (He is, by the way, no more sanguine about conditions in his own country than in the U.S. Tony Blair has "sold [the U.K.] down the river" and his government "is interested only in big business.")

Pinter may seem an extreme case, and in some ways he is. Not many commentators approach the level of insouciant simplemindedness displayed in this interview. But in one way, at least, he is quite representative. I have spent my entire adult life among intellectuals, and over and over have encountered the implicit attitude Pinter makes explicit: "Political issues don't seem to me to be at all complex."

It never ceases to bewilder me. People who in their fields of expertise insist on rigor, precision, and high seriousness approach politics as a cartoon world of heroes and villains, sinister special interests and noble suffering humanity. They think in clichés and speak in agitprop. How can a Pinter or anyone else possibly suppose that "human life is very, very complex"—

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except when it comes to politics? Intellectuals as such have no particular responsibility to take time away from what they know best to immerse themselves in the intricacies of political life and thought, but absent such immersion they would do well not to give public utterance to their ignorance. To sum up by random example: Albert Einstein should have stuck to his physics.

Intellectuals are people who understand, or ought to understand, that the more seriously one engages a subject the more complicated he finds it to be. Scholars experience the phenomenon time after time: you approach a new subject with a few large general impressions and inevitably discover, upon investigation, that the impressions don't do justice to the complexity of the data, or, at the very least, that they take on shades of ambiguity you had not previously imagined. Alfred North Whitehead's dictum holds as much in politics as it does anywhere else: the only simplicity to be trusted is that which emerges at the far side of complexity.

Intellectuals who take their calling seriously know that they have a moral duty to be intellectually unfrivolous. They do a disservice both to their own integrity and to the public interest when they think that duty ends at the gateway of politics. FT

Giving Time to the Dirt in Rows

My wife framed a poster decades ago,
Take time—picture of a daddy holding a kid.
So I made time for them at baseball games,
before survival training and Saigon.
Down on both knees, I taught our babies
tickle and horsey rides, caught all three kids
with the same oiled catcher's mitt,

then waved them away on planes. Berries and beans
sustain us, now that our children have gone—
and okra so slick why bother to chew,
just swallow. There's work in digging our own
potatoes—never mind the worms, dirt
under the nails. It's grace, no matter how high
the water bill, how many bushels we reap.

All that crawling around between rows
takes time, squatting like ducks hunting for bugs,
turning flab into muscle, to tighter skin
and bone. Years ago, each child turned back
and waved—memories we keep like nights
in Montana, blessings no one could earn,
like potatoes, berries, and beans.

Walt McDonald

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Opinion

The Blight of Cultural Rights

Michael Linton

Last December, soon after the Supreme Court had pulled the chain on Florida's chad fest, Bill Ivey, the Clinton-appointed director of the National Endowment for the Arts, spoke to the National Press Club. American culture had flourished under the Clinton-Gore Administration, he said. Congress had approved the agency's first budget increase since 1992. The country had seen a growing access to "quality art and design" as evidenced by such things as Michael Graves and Martha Stewart designing stuff for Target and Kmart. Ivey noted that even the construction workers in his building were ordering double lattes. America, in his description, seemed poised at the threshold of a cultural golden age.

But there was a hint of alarm. There were still those who opposed the NEA's work. As a preemptive strike against them (and their possible allies in a Bush Administration) Ivey presented "An American Bill of Rights for Culture." They are (summarized):

> 1) the right to "fully explore America's overarching collective experience as it is embodied in music, literature, theater, painting, and dance"; 2) the right to "make art, to become artist-citizens"; 3) the right to "engage a healthy and valued community of creative artists"; 4) the right "to choose among a broad range of experiences and services . . . provided by a community of cultural organizations"; 5) the right "to an external representation of our nation's expressive life that accurately conveys the complexity and diversity of America's human and material artistic resources to the world"; 6) the right "to engage in art and art-making of the highest aesthetic quality . . . that embodies universal truths or art of quality that auditions the unique character of diverse nations and communities."

In a column reacting to Ivey's speech, George Will complained that Ivey's NEA had promoted an egalitarianism that conflated handicraft with art, the trivial with the significant. Noting that the NEA had gone so far as to include dinner-table arrangements and "playtime activities" as kinds of art (and thus eligible for grants), Will thought that one of the Bush Administration's first tasks was not to establish Ivey's six rights but instead to define just what "culture" was and was not, and thus what was appropriate for government support.

Certainly there is much to criticize in Ivey's remarks, but there is much to affirm also. Who can be against people coming to know the elements of their culture? And isn't anything of the highest quality of inherent value? On the other hand, the notion of someone being an apparently privileged "artist-citizen" worthy of his own set of "rights" is bizarre (are we to have corresponding rights for "plumber-citizens" or "rancher-citizens"?). Ivey claims these rights are "moral claims on the public conscience." The federal government must promote "art, art-making, heritage, and creativity," because it has to recognize "a moral claim to a cultural agenda in order to enhance the lives of young citizens, strengthen communities, [and] bridge the spiritual divide."

Ah, there's the rub. If a "moral claim" is to be made on behalf of a cultural agenda, whose culture, and whose morality, and whose claim is it to be? Let me give you a specific example.

I am a composer. I make my living teaching people about the mechanics of music. And as is the case with every artist, the portrait of who and what I am is presented most directly and intimately in the particular music I write myself, in my art. My art—or certainly my most important art—is about Jesus. This is not to say that my music is anything quite like what my fellow evangelicals would expect "Christian music" to be. It isn't. It is offensive. It is highly dissonant and rhythmically disjointed. It is sometimes bizarre and often uncomfortable. If it does not quite shock, it unsettles. It is often frightening. It is sometimes angry. It is desperate. But my music is this way because I find the Gospels compel me to write it this way: bizarre (as the kindness of a Samaritan is bizarre), uncomfortable (as an answer to a rich young man is uncomfortable), unsettling (as an empty tomb is unsettling), and frightening (as the presence of an angel is frightening). It is angry because I am angry at not being a better person than I am and angry because believers are so prone to waste the gifts given to us. It is desperate because my only hope lies in but touching the hem of his garment. It is offensive because the whole gospel is offensive to those who believe themselves well.

David Wojnarowicz (pronounced voh-nah-ROH-vitch) was born in 1954 in Redbank, New Jersey. He died from complications of AIDS in 1992. He was an

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essayist and artist whose art was about being gay. For him, homosexuality was not an orientation but a way in which he was obliged to see the world. As one critic put it, for Wojnarowicz being gay was an "existential condition, a state of mind . . . a kind of moral insomnia that dictated how one lived a life."

His 1989 *Sex Series (House)* is typical of his work. The roughly nine square foot silver print shows a house and a water tower apparently assaulted by the winds of a tornado. Hanging above the house like a huge full moon is a bit of commercial pornography of two young men having sex. The same year as *Sex Series* he wrote an essay called "Postcards from America: X-Rays from Hell." Angry over John Cardinal O'Connor's resistance to teaching safe sex in New York public schools, Wojnarowicz called O'Connor a "fat cannibal." St. Patrick's Cathedral was a fascist house of "walking swastikas," and the Cardinal, like all people in power who committed crimes against the people, worthy of the death penalty. Wojnarowicz repeated his accusations against the Cardinal in the catalogue for an AIDS-related exhibition, "Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing." Because of political pressure from conservatives, John Frohnmayer, then chairman of the NEA, revoked a $10,000 grant that the agency had given the project, but restored the grant after the New York art community protested his decision. When the American Family Association attacked Wojnarowicz's exhibition "Tongues of Flame," the artist took it to court, seeking damages for copyright violation, defamation of character, and violation of New York's law prohibiting unauthorized alteration and dissemination of an artist's work. Wojnarowicz won the case and a symbolic one dollar in damages.

Two artists. Two cultures. My viewpoint is Christian. Wojnarowicz's was queer. I am a part of a community of Christian artists who are themselves part of a segment of American society for which traditional religion forms the core of their identity. Wojnarowicz was part of a community of gay artists who are part of a community for whom sexuality is the core of their existence and AIDS their defining holocaust. My models are writers: O'Connor, Lewis, Buechner, Percy. His models were writers: Rimbaud, William S. Burroughs, Jean Genet. I am an obscure artist. Wojnarowicz was obscure (his first paintings were graffiti on the Hudson docks west of Greenwich Village), but he became a recognized figure in the New York art scene and since his death has been elevated into something of a cultural icon. In 1999, the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York staged a major retrospective of his works and the *New York Times* bestowed its imprimatur upon the event by publishing a major review of the artist. Even the design house Versace got on board, choosing works by Wojnarowicz to highlight their spring collection—displayed in huge windows down the street from St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue.

Which of us, Linton or Wojnarowicz, represents a legitimate national culture? Which of our works should receive support at taxpayer expense? When gay artists such as Wojnarowicz seek to have their art supported by government funds, putting together gallery exhibitions and concert performances of art that speaks of and to them, Christian conservatives typically cry foul, asking why they should be required to support art that they find profoundly objectionable. Yet should the NEA be approached to support my art, or the art of a Christian like me—say, the composition of a cantata honoring the poverty and chastity of St. Teresa, intended to be performed where Christians have always thought their art best belonged, in church as part of the liturgy—would not the left be within their rights to voice the same objections? Why should New York's virulently anti-Christian gay community see any of their tax money spent on a project that would be so potentially objectionable to them? Certainly there can be no more justification for Barney Frank and Americans for whom he speaks to be required to support my artistic expression (and the expression of my culture) than there can be for Jesse Helms and those for whom he speaks to underwrite a Wojnarowicz catalogue.

Ivey is right to mention a "spiritual divide" in conjunction with the arts. There is a chasm between my world and Wojnarowicz's. But art does not bridge that chasm, it defines it. Art marks its boundaries. By declaring who he is, the artist simultaneously declares who he is not. Communities find an artist's work meaningful because they find elements of themselves and what matters to them expressed there more eloquently than anywhere else. Communities cohere around kinds of artistic expression because those clusters help them separate themselves from others. When the folks at Versace put up Wojnarowicz's work in their windows they were in effect marking boundaries. *We* are here. *You* are there. And *here* is the divide.

Our positions are extreme, Wojnarowicz's and mine. There are gay artists for whom homosexuality is of little significance to their work (Ned Rorem, for example), and Christians whose work is more conventional than mine. Yet the breadth of our differences does testify to the very real divisions in American culture. That now-famous *USA Today* county-by-county map of the United States split into Bush reds and Gore blues dramatically showed one way in which the country is split.

There are other divisions too. There is no one American culture. Instead there coexist several national cultures that are increasingly antithetical to each other

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and between which there seems to be dwindling common ground. There is my culture and Wojnarowicz's. There is the culture of the folklorist who argues that the Tennessee basket weaver is as significant an artist as the concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic and the culture of the trustees of Juilliard, who might dispute that claim. There is the culture of the academic deconstructionist who writes that all art is just a grab for power and that demands for "excellence" (whether made by a folklorist, or a basket weaver, or the NEA itself) are really simply coded expressions of oppression based upon race, class, or sexual orientation. And then there is the culture of money. Things are good if they sell. Things that do not are not so much bad as they are irrelevant.

The Blues and the Reds. And hundreds of shades of violets and purples in between. Contrary to Will's advice, the Bush Administration cannot define culture. It can only choose sides. By granting support to one group, the NEA simultaneously denies support to another, and by granting support the NEA in effect establishes that particular culture, if only for a moment, as the legitimate expression of America. Thus the only thing we can be confident of the NEA doing is defining divisions in our country and thereby exacerbating them. While it can be argued that the agency might try to balance its grants, carefully giving equal amounts of support to opposing groups, such a policy would be an administrative nightmare, guaranteed only to swamp the government in a mire of contention.

When Lyndon Johnson proposed the legislation that established the NEA in 1965, the then—and present—Senator from South Carolina Strom Thurmond rose to challenge the bill. It was not within the prerogatives of Congress to enact such legislation, he argued, and in any case the government subsidy would lead to the stifling of creativity and the institutionalization of mediocrity. When the Republicans gained control of Congress in Clinton's first mid-term election, the right wing of the party vowed to close the NEA's shop in revenge for the agency's support of left-wing projects. But Strom Thurmond lost the vote in 1965 and in 1995 the Republicans lost their nerve.

Now it is time. The Bush Administration should introduce legislation to close the NEA. This is not some Taliban-like assault on culture. It is instead a move to preserve and protect cultures. No member of the radical queer left should find his taxes used to support a work of art that attacks his chosen—and legal—lifestyle. No Christian fundamentalist should be so discomfited as to find that his government had supported a project that ridiculed the objects of his faith. No artist, neither Wojnarowicz nor me nor anyone else, should be made to feel disenfranchised and marginalized by the establishment of a court patronage system and potentially be forced to misrepresent his art in order to curry governmental favor. And no government bureaucrat should be given the power of choosing for Americans what the nature of "American culture" is or is not going to be.

Let us choose for ourselves. And let the country's various societies support the arts that are most important to them. If, after debate, we still believe that the federal government should have some mechanism for encouraging the arts, then let it be through reduced taxation. In particular let the wealthiest among us, traditionally the most generous to the arts, keep much more of their wealth so that they may be generous to whom they choose. Let private foundations, such as the short-lived ART MATTERS (which supported significant leftist and gay artists and projects) and Soli Deo Gloria (the Wheaton, Illinois, based foundation which funds the performance of religious concert works), be the patrons of our country's artists and arts organizations. But keep Washington out of the business of supervising culture and going to the ridiculous extreme of lecturing us on what our "cultural rights" are.

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Politics at Prayer

Peter J. Leithart

Liturgy and politics don't mix. For two things to mix, they have to be separable; liturgy and politics are not. Participation in the Christian liturgy is always a political act. Worship, far from being a retreat from politics, embodies a new kind of politics, a genuinely Christian politics. Liturgy and politics are not like the salt and pepper that can be added to your scrambled egg; they are more like the scramble and the egg.

Our misguided assumptions about symbols and rituals explain why the political nature of the liturgy is not self-evident to Christians. At least since the Reformation, and especially among Protestants, it has gone without saying that symbols and rituals are marginal to the bread-and-butter concerns of life. Literal language is basic, but when we want to be poetic or persuasive we dress it up with tropes. A blank wall is the norm, but we might want, if we can afford it, to adorn it with pictures. Most days, we just eat, but when there's a special occasion we dress up our meal with special ceremony and ritual. So it is with worship: after we spend the week passing ourselves off as black-and-white Marxists and

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materialists, we spend the weekend embellishing life with a dash of colorful spirituality.

If Rush Limbaugh is to be believed, the same is true of our politics: the substance of politics is the rowdy give-and-take of elections, legislation, organizing, and swaying opinion, and we must beware of politicians who engage in "mere symbolism." But Rush Limbaugh—at least on this point—is not to be believed. Gaining and holding power has always been bound up with manipulation of impressions and images, and this has become even more evidently true now that the media have such a prominent role in driving politics. Much of President Clinton's popularity had to do with his habit of surrounding himself with the coolest of the cool—movie stars, pop musicians, sports personalities. Breathing the same air, he participated in their cool, and was transfigured into another pop icon. Likewise, John McCain's appeal in the Republican primaries had more to do with his informal style, his refreshing bluntness, his humor, his underdog status, and his legendary experience as a POW than with his policy positions.

Pointing out that politics is shot through with symbolism is not the same as proving that Christian worship is a political act. And asserting that liturgy and politics are inseparable is not the same as explaining how. My insistence on the inseparability of liturgy and politics is not an endorsement of trendy efforts to make Christian liturgy "more relevant." Liturgies for the homeless, for AIDS victims, for the oppressed peoples of the earth, for the whales, for an end to Florida's recounts, for whatever—these are objectionable not only because they are kitschy and not only because they bind worship to a political agenda. More fundamentally, they are objectionable because they assume that the liturgy itself is apolitical and needs to be made political. Those who wish to purify the liturgy of politics and those who want to inject contemporary politics into the liturgy share a common basic outlook: both assume that politics and liturgy are separable zones of life, which can be mixed or not mixed as we please.

For the apostle Paul, the connection of worship and politics was axiomatic, though the political import of his liturgical discussions can be obscure to modern readers. Paul's lengthiest discourse on Christian worship comes, oddly, in the midst of his answers to questions about eating meat sacrificed to idols, which he addresses in his first letter to the Corinthians. Now on our scale of concerns, what to do about meat sacrificed to idols ranks somewhere below decisions about whether to sod or seed the yard, but in Paul's day eating meat was a question about the limits of Christian participation in pagan culture. In a city like Corinth, much of the meat offered at the butcher's shop had been sacrificed to idols. Indeed, in ancient Greek, the same word was used for both "butcher" and "sacrificer," and procedures for butchery were normally religiously prescribed. Had Christians been forbidden to eat meat sacrificed to idols, they would virtually have had to become vegetarians. And their vegetarianism would have been a form of political protest (much as it is today).

Paul did not urge Christians to become vegetarians, as we know. Since there is only one God, idols are nothing; so long as the Christians offered thanksgiving to God for the meat, they could accept it without any qualms of conscience, as a gift from the hand of the One who opens His hand to satisfy the desires of every living thing. Paul later reiterated this principle: "Eat anything that is sold in the meat market, without asking questions for conscience's sake; for the earth is the Lord's, and all it contains. If one of the unbelievers invites you, and you wish to go, eat anything that is set before you, without asking questions for conscience's sake." Freedom to eat meat sacrificed to idols was limited only by the demands of love: "Take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak," lest your eating offend any brothers for whom Christ died.

Later in the same section of 1 Corinthians, however, Paul appears to shift ground and prohibit eating meat sacrificed to idols. Gentiles sacrificed to demons and became communicants with demons in the process, and Paul warned the Corinthians not "to become sharers in demons" (10:21). Well, could they eat or couldn't they? The resolution to this apparent contradiction is to notice that Paul was addressing two different sets of circumstances. On the one hand, all meat available at the local butcher's was to be accepted gratefully. On the other hand, Paul prohibited Christians from actually participating in the sacrificial rituals of pagan worship. It is possible to receive meat sacrificed to idols and give thanks to God. It is not possible to share a meal dedicated to Luna the Moon Goddess and simultaneously give thanks to God. Participating in the Lord's Supper in the Christian liturgy was incompatible with participating in the feasts of pagan gods.

In urging the Corinthians to refrain from idolatrous feasts, Paul was exhorting them to separate not merely from pagan "religion," but also from the pagan social and political system. Unlike cities of the modern West, the Greco-Roman city was as much a religious as a political organization, and citizens were expected to participate in thoroughly religious civic festivals, which included sacrifices to the gods and goddesses who served as protectors of the city, whether Athena in Athens, or Artemis in Ephesus. Refusal to participate in the feasts of idols was thus a refusal of one privilege (and duty) of citizenship.

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Paul did not require that Christians renounce all rights as citizens—he himself made use of his rights as a Roman to advance the gospel—but the fact that the Corinthians ate at the Lord's table meant they were citizens of the Lord's city to which their citizenship in Corinth had to be subordinate. This was not an apolitical act or a renunciation of politics, but a sign that the Church was a different sort of political order. As such, it was a direct challenge to the claims of the pagan political order.

The Eucharist was a sign of the Church's distinctness from the world, a sign that she constituted a new "city" that had invaded the ancient city, a sign that, contrary to Aristotle, the virtuous life was lived in the Church rather than in the Greek polis. By participating in this ritual, Christians were committing themselves to maintaining a critical distance from the political system. They were committing themselves to what Rowan Williams has called the "fundamental Christian vocation of not belonging." And that commitment, enacted liturgically, is emphatically political.

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Apocrypha

When this boy Jesus was five years old,
he went down to a ford of the brook.
— Apocryphal Infancy Gospel of Thomas

The small boy knelt beside the water,
Sculpting birds of earth
Which flew off when he told them to scatter.
And if that's not the truth,

Then why is the square so full of sparrows,
Living on puddles and crusts;
Singing small praises as daylight narrows,
Cleansed in summer's dust?

Out of spring's infinity
Birds and children start.
Yet with a word this child conferred
A span of life to art.

John Jackson

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Anthropic Coincidences

Stephen M. Barr

How important is the human race in the scheme of things? According to the Epistle to Diognetus, a Christian work of the early second century, "God loved the race of men. It was for their sakes that He made the world." The consensus of later Christian tradition does not go quite that far, holding that the purpose of Creation is to manifest God's glory, not simply to benefit mankind. And yet Scripture and tradition certainly concur in teaching that the human race has a central place in the divine plan. In the Book of Genesis, the six days of creation culminate in the creation of man, and man alone of all the creatures is said to be made "in the image of God." If we are not the sole or the chief end of Creation, it is nevertheless the Jewish and Christian view that in creating the world God had the human race in mind. Indeed, St. Paul tells the Ephesians that they were chosen by God and destined to be His sons "before the foundation of the world."

On the other hand, we have often been told, science regards man and his place in the world very differently. In the story of science as it is told by materialists the human race is not central to the purpose of the universe for the simple reason that the universe has no purpose. This is the view set forth in a well-known passage in Steven Weinberg's best-selling book *The First Three Minutes*:

> It is almost irresistible for humans to believe that we have some special relation to the universe, that human life is not just a farcical outcome of a chain of accidents . . . but that we were somehow built-in from the beginning. . . . It is very hard for us to realize that [the entire earth] is just a tiny part of an overwhelmingly hostile universe. . . . The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless.

It is the view not only of Weinberg but of many scientists that the progress of science has more and more made the universe appear "pointless," and the human race an accidental by-product of blind material forces. Indeed, this is thought by many to be the key lesson that science has to teach us. A particularly forthright champion of this view is the zoologist Richard Dawkins, who writes that "the universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is at bottom no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pointless indifference."

The pointlessness of the cosmos and its indifference to human beings is also a main theme in the writings of the zoologist Stephen Jay Gould, who claims that the human race is a freak accident of evolutionary history, merely "a tiny twig on an ancient tree of life." We are, said Bertrand Russell, but "a curious accident in a backwater" of the universe.

Certainly, much in the history of science encourages this "marginalization of man." If nothing else, the very size of the cosmos seems to tell of our insignificance. And yet, discussions about the size and age of the universe do not come to grips with the real question: Is the human race an accident, or were we meant to be here? To put it in Weinberg's terms, were we "somehow built-in from the beginning?"

As it happens, new light has been shed on this question by the discoveries of modern physics. It has been noticed, especially since the work of the astrophysicist Brandon Carter in the 1970s, that there are

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many features of the laws of nature that seem arranged, even "fine-tuned," to make possible the existence of life, including intelligent beings such as ourselves. At least on the face of it, these so-called "anthropic coincidences" would appear to support the idea that we *were* built-in from the beginning. Even some former atheists and agnostics have seen in them impressive evidence of a divine plan. And yet, many others maintain that a perfectly naturalistic explanation of these coincidences is possible. Rather than settling the age-old questions, then, the "anthropic" arguments seem only to have generated new controversy. Before getting into that controversy, it will be helpful to look at a few examples of anthropic coincidences. I will start with a detailed look at two of the most famous examples, both of which concern the origin of the chemical elements needed for life.

All life is based on chemistry—very complex chemistry, as even a cursory look at a biochemistry textbook makes clear. The human body, for instance, is made up of no fewer than twenty-five different chemical elements. Altogether, almost a hundred chemical elements occur naturally, the smallest being hydrogen, and the largest uranium. Where did all these elements come from? And why are the chemical possibilities of our universe so rich?

Hydrogen has been around since very soon after the Big Bang. But almost all of the other elements were forged later, either in the deep interiors of stars, or in the violent explosions called supernovas with which some stars end their lives. These supernova explosions are also important for life because they spew the elements made within stars out into space where they can form new stars, or planets, or people. Indeed, most of the elements in our bodies were made inside stars that exploded before the sun was born. We are quite literally made of stardust.

For our purposes, it is crucial to note that the elements are formed in a sequential manner by nuclear reactions in which the nuclei of smaller atoms fuse together to make the nuclei of larger atoms. These same "nuclear fusion" reactions also produce the energy radiated by stars (including, of course, the sun), energy that is essential to support life. The first step in the process of forging the elements is the fusing together of pairs of hydrogen nuclei to make something called "deuterium." Deuterium is the first and vital link in the whole chain. If deuterium had been prevented from forming, none of the later steps could have taken place, and the universe would have contained no elements other than hydrogen. This would have been a disaster, for it is scarcely conceivable that a living thing could be made of hydrogen alone. Moreover, had the deuterium link been cut, the nuclear processes by which stars burn would have been prevented.

Everything thus depends on hydrogen being able to fuse to make deuterium. Here is where the first remarkable anthropic coincidence comes in. The force of nature that cements nuclei together is called the "strong nuclear force." Had the strong nuclear force been weaker by even as little as 10 percent, it would not have been able to fuse two hydrogens together to make deuterium, and the prospects of life would have been dim indeed. But this is only the half of it. Had the strong nuclear force been only a few percent *stronger* than it is, an opposite disaster would have occurred. It would have been *too easy* for hydrogen nuclei to fuse together. The nuclear burning in stars would have gone much too fast. Stars would have burned themselves out in millions of years or less, rather than the several billion years that stars like the sun last. However, the history of life on earth suggests that billions of years are required for the evolution of complex life such as ourselves. The upshot of all these considerations is that the strong nuclear force has just the right strength: a little stronger or weaker and we would not have been here.

Once deuterium is made, deuterium nuclei can combine by fusion processes to make helium nuclei. These steps happen very readily. At this point, however, another critical juncture is reached: somehow, helium nuclei must fuse to make yet larger elements. But all the obvious ways this could happen are forbidden by the laws of physics. In particular, two helium nuclei cannot fuse together. This was quite a puzzle for nuclear theorists and astrophysicists. How did all the elements larger than helium come to be made?

The answer was found by Fred Hoyle, who suggested that nature in effect did a large double step to get past the missing rung in the ladder. When two helium nuclei collide in the interior of a star they cannot fuse permanently, but they do remain stuck together momentarily—for about a hundredth of a millionth of a billionth of a second. In that tiny sliver of time a third helium nucleus comes along and hits the other two in a three-way collision. *Three* heliums, as it happens, *do* have enough sticking power to fuse together permanently. When they do so they form a nucleus called "carbon-12." This highly unusual triple collision process is called the "three-alpha process," and it is the way that almost all of the carbon in the universe is made. Without it, the only elements around would be hydrogen and helium, leading to an almost certainly lifeless universe.

It was in looking closely at the three-alpha process that Hoyle discovered one of the most dramatic of the anthropic coincidences. Hoyle's preliminary calculations showed him that such a rare event as the three-alpha process would not make enough carbon unless something greatly enhanced its effectiveness. That something, he realized, must be what is called in physics a "resonance." There are many examples of resonance

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phenomena in everyday life. A big truck going by a house can rattle the window panes if the frequency of the sound waves matches up, or "resonates," with one of the "natural modes of vibration" of the window. Similarly, opera singers can shatter wine glasses by hitting just the right note. In other words, an effect that would ordinarily be very feeble can be greatly enhanced if it occurs resonantly.

Now, it happens that atomic nuclei too have characteristic "notes" or "modes of vibration," called "energy levels," and nuclear reactions can be enormously facilitated if they hit upon one of these energy levels. Hoyle pointed out that the three-alpha process could have produced enough carbon only if the carbon-12 nucleus has an energy level in just the right place. Indeed, experiments done shortly thereafter confirmed that it does. Had this energy level of carbon-12 been only a few percent higher or lower in frequency, the three-alpha process would have been out of tune, as it were. Without carbon, and the elements heavier than carbon, life as we know it would have been unable to exist.

One sees that the making of the chemical elements needed for life was, to borrow the Duke of Wellington's comment on his victory at Waterloo, "a damn close run thing."

One can see anthropic coincidences not only in the nuclear processes that formed the elements, but in many quite various aspects of the laws of physics. To give a better idea of this variety, I will describe a few more examples, though in less detail.

The "strong nuclear force" is one of four basic forces of nature that is presently known. The others are the so-called "weak interaction," gravity, and electromagnetism. In the phenomena of our everyday lives, electromagnetism plays a dominant, although perhaps not obvious, role. For example, matter is held together by the electrical attraction of atoms, and light consists of electromagnetic waves. In contrast, the strong nuclear force plays no direct role in effects that we can experience. That is because its influence extends only over subatomic distances. Nevertheless, the electromagnetic force is intrinsically much weaker than the strong nuclear force. In fact it is, in a certain well-defined sense, about one hundred times weaker. This is very fortunate. Had the electromagnetic force *not* been intrinsically much weaker than the strong nuclear force, the electrical energy packed inside a hydrogen nucleus would have been so great as to render it unstable. The "weak interaction" would then have made all the hydrogen in the world decay radioactively, with a very short half-life, into other particles. The world would have been left devoid of hydrogen, and therefore almost certainly of life. For water, which is indispensable for life, contains hydrogen, as do almost all organic molecules. We see, then, how life depends on a delicate balance among the various fundamental forces of nature, and in particular on the relative feebleness of electromagnetic effects.

Another fortunate fact has to do with the flatness of space. Einstein taught us that space-time is not flat, but curved. Because of this curvature, bodies seem to attract each other by the force we call gravity. However, it turns out that the space of our universe, if looked at on large enough scales of distance, is on average astonishingly flat. The "spatial curvature," as it is called, is very small. In fact, shortly after the Big Bang the spatial curvature of the universe was, to the accuracy of many decimal places, equal to zero. For a long time, this was referred to as the "flatness problem," since no one could think of a good explanation for it. However, while long a difficult thing for theorists to explain, this flatness of space is very fortunate. Had the flatness of space *not* been fantastically small to begin with, the universe would either have collapsed and ended a very short time—a tiny fraction of a second—after it began, or would have undergone such a tremendously rapid expansion that it would have torn matter and even atoms asunder.

So far I have described various quantities, like the strengths of the strong nuclear force and the flatness of space, that had to be "fine-tuned" to very special numerical values to make life as we know it possible. But there are also certain gross qualitative features of the laws of physics that are "anthropically" important. One example is the fact that space is three-dimensional. We take this fact for granted, but we shouldn't. That space has three dimensions is an empirical fact, not a metaphysical necessity. Theoretical physicists study hypothetical universes with other numbers of dimensions all the time. If the world had not had three space dimensions, but four or more of them, the gravitational force between two objects would have depended in a different way upon the distance between them. And that, in turn, would have made it impossible for planets to orbit stably around stars: they would either have plummeted into stars or flown off into space. (Interestingly, the first person to point out this consequence of a different law of gravity was the Anglican clergyman William Paley. Paley was one of the first people to think about anthropic coincidences in the laws of nature.) In the same way, the orbits of electrons in atoms would not have been stable, and life based on chemistry would have been impossible.

On the other hand, had there been *fewer* than three space dimensions, complex organisms would doubtless have been impossible for quite a different reason. Complex neural circuitry, as is needed in a brain, would not be possible in one or two dimen-

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sions. If one tries to draw a complicated circuit diagram on a two-dimensional surface, one finds that the wires have to intersect each other many times, leading to short-circuits.

As a final example, the fact that nature obeys the principles of quantum theory is highly important for the possibility of life. It turns out that matter would not be stable in a non-quantum world. People generally suppose that the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle makes the world, at least at the atomic level, a fuzzier and more indefinite place. However, paradoxical as it may sound, that principle is ultimately responsible for the fact that subatomic particles form stable atoms with well-defined chemical properties. Were it not for the principles of quantum theory, matter would be amorphous and protean to such a degree that it is hard to imagine a living organism being possible.

What do physicists make of such anthropic coincidences? There is a wide spectrum of opinion. Some of the greatest scientists of our time, including Yacov Zel'dovich, Andrei Sakharov, Lev Okun, Martin Rees, and Steven Weinberg, to name but a few, have been interested in them and have devoted study to them. Nevertheless, the subject provokes discomfort and even hostility in much of the physics community, partly due to the specter of teleology. Physicists have a strong instinctive professional aversion to teleological thinking, because, at least in the physical sciences, the scientific revolution was to a large extent made possible by the rejection of teleology in favor of mechanism. I suspect, though, that there is more to this nervousness about anthropic coincidences—namely, the specter of religion.

Yet, scientific skepticism about these ideas is not based entirely on such prejudices. There are several arguments against the idea of anthropic coincidences that must be taken seriously.

First, it is argued that we cannot really know what is necessary for life to arise. Life might take forms that are utterly alien to our experience. While the life that we know about makes use of a certain kind of physics, who knows whether, with different physical laws, completely different possibilities for life might have existed?

This objection has some real force. In some cases, I think, all we can honestly assert is that it appears highly unlikely that life could have arisen had the laws of physics been different in this or that respect—unlikely, but perhaps not utterly impossible. In such questions absolute certainty may not be attainable due to our limited imaginations. However, absolute certainty may be beside the point. We might still be left with strong *indications* that the cosmos was made with us in mind, even if those indications do not add up to a proof. After all, the reasons that scientists like Weinberg, Dawkins, and Gould give for reaching the opposite conclusion are also not subject to proof.

The second objection is that conventional scientific explanations may exist for some if not all of the facts that now appear to be anthropic coincidences. In fact, among the examples I gave of anthropic coincidences I included two where we may already have at least a partial scientific explanation of the facts involved. The fact that the electromagnetic force is much weaker than the strong nuclear force, for instance, is probably partly explained by the idea of "grand unification." There are reasons to believe that the electromagnetic force, the weak interaction, and the strong nuclear force are really all aspects of one underlying "grand unified" force. If that is so, then the strengths of the different forces are not independent of each other, but are tied together in a definite way. In fact, in a typical grand unified model—and many such models have been proposed—the electromagnetic force does indeed come out to be much weaker than the strong nuclear force. Another of the anthropic coincidences concerns the flatness of space. This too is a fact for which we now have a probable explanation: it is thought to be a consequence of an effect called "cosmic inflation."

Thus, it is more than likely that at least some of the facts about the laws of physics that appear favorable to our existence do have conventional scientific explanations. Even if that proved to be true of all of them, however, it would not explain away the coincidental nature of these facts. The critical point was well expressed by the noted astrophysicists Bernard Carr and Martin Rees:

> One day we may have a more physical explanation for some of the relationships . . . that now seem genuine coincidences. For example, [some of them] may eventually be subsumed as a consequence of some presently unformulated unified theory. However, *even if all apparently anthropic coincidences could be explained in this way, it would still be remarkable that the relationships dictated by physical theory happened also to be those propitious for life.* [emphasis added]

In other words, suppose that there are twenty numerical relationships that have to hold in order for life to be possible, and suppose that in some physical theory every one of those twenty relationships happens to hold as a consequence of some underlying physical principle. That would *itself* amount to an astonishing coincidence.

This brings us to the third objection, which is closely related to the second. Einstein famously asked whether God had a choice in how He made the world. Many physicists nowadays suspect not. They suspect

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that all mathematical relationships in the laws of physics will turn out to be dictated by some deep underlying principles that leave no room for things to have been otherwise. One frequently hears the possibility discussed that the laws of physics are "unique." The idea is that everything about the physical world—the kinds of particles that exist, the kinds of forces and their relative strengths, the number of dimensions of space and its degree of flatness, the energy levels of the carbon-12 nucleus, and so on, down to the smallest detail—may have to be as they are on account of some fundamental physical principles. If so, God could not have the freedom to arrange the laws of nature to be "propitious for life" or otherwise, since His hands were completely tied.

However, this is plainly wrong. Physical principles could not have tied God's hands, for the simple reason that He could have chosen some *other* principles upon which to base the laws of physics. For example, while the relative feebleness of the electromagnetic force, which we saw to be anthropically fortunate, may be a necessary outcome of a "grand unified" framework, it was by no means necessary that the world be built according to such a "grand unified" framework. In fact, we still do not know whether it is. So, in this particular matter God clearly did have a choice—indeed, many choices, as there are many mathematically self-consistent frameworks that involve "grand unification" and many that do not.

As a matter of fact, there are an infinite number of mathematically self-consistent sets of laws of physics that could have been chosen as the basis for the structure of a universe. This is incontestable. When those (good) physicists talk about the laws of physics being possibly "unique," they are speaking very loosely. What they really have in mind is the idea that a unique set of laws may be necessary if it has to satisfy certain assumed preconditions. For example, many theorists believe that there is only one possible set of laws—"superstring theory"—that can incorporate simultaneously the principles of quantum theory and the principles of Einsteinian gravity. However, there is certainly no reason to suppose a priori that the universe had to incorporate either quantum theory or Einsteinian gravity. In short, the universe could have been made differently, and if it had been life might not have been able to arise. These assertions, it seems to me, can hardly be disputed.

Before one leaps to the conclusion that the anthropic coincidences inevitably point to God, one should be aware of the fact that many of the scientists who have written about anthropic coincidences are atheists. (Steven Weinberg is a notable example.) It is their view that the laws of physics being "propitious" for life, far from pointing to the importance of life or human beings in some cosmic "plan," has a purely naturalistic, scientific explanation. The explanation that they offer is based on an idea that is called the Anthropic Principle. There are various anthropic principles that are discussed, but the only one taken seriously by scientists as being plausible and having any explanatory power is called the Weak Anthropic Principle, or WAP for short. It should be noted that careless writers often talk about "the anthropic principle" when what they really mean is "anthropic coincidences." The two ideas should not be confused: the anthropic coincidences are facts, while the anthropic "principle" is a speculative hypothesis for explaining those facts.

The idea of the Weak Anthropic Principle is easiest to grasp using an analogy. There are many things about conditions on the planet Earth that are propitious for life. If the Earth were much smaller, then it would not be able to retain an atmosphere. If it were much bigger, it would retain a lot of hydrogen in its atmosphere, which might be bad for life. If it were much closer to the sun it would be too hot to have liquid water, if much farther away it would be too cold. Has someone "fine-tuned" conditions here to make life possible? Not necessarily. There are presumably a vast number of planets in the universe. (In the context of present-day theory, it is not unlikely that there are an infinite number.) Some planets are hot, some cold. some big, and some small. They undoubtedly span a vast range of physical and chemical conditions. It seems inevitable that some of them would happen to have the right conditions for life.

To put it another way, if one tried one key in an unknown lock, it would be an astonishing coincidence if it worked. But if one tried a million keys it would not be greatly surprising if one of them did.

The idea of the Weak Anthropic Principle is that the same kind of argument can be used not just about planets, but about universes. Suppose that there are a huge number of universes. Some may have three space dimensions, some two, some four, and so on. In some, the electromagnetic force may be weaker than the strong nuclear force, in others it may be stronger, and in others there may be no such thing as the electromagnetic force at all. That is, all sorts of possible physical laws might be tried out in different universes. If so, it might not be surprising, assuming that a great enough number and variety of universes existed, that some of them would have just the right laws of physics to permit life. And of course, to the inhabitants of such an exceptional universe, it might seem that someone had arranged things in their universe with them in mind. This is an old idea, going back at least to David Hume, who suggested that "many worlds might have been botched and bungled, throughout an eternity, ere this system was struck out."

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Before examining this idea critically, one must distinguish two versions of it. In the version that physicists take seriously, the many "universes" are not really distinct and separate universes at all, but domains or regions of one all-encompassing Universe. The domains are far apart in space, or otherwise prevented from communicating with each other. Conditions are assumed to be so different from one domain to another that they appear superficially to have different physical laws. However, at a deeper level all the domains are really controlled by one and the same set of fundamental laws. These laws also control what types of domains the universe has, and how many of each type.

The other version of the idea posits the existence of a large number of universes that really are universes, distinct and unconnected in any way with each other. Each has its own set of physical laws. There is no overarching physical system of which each is a part. One can understand why this version is not discussed among scientists. At least in the many-domains version all the domains are part of the same universe as we, so that, even if we cannot in practice observe them directly, we might hope at least to infer their existence theoretically from a deep understanding of the laws of nature. In the many-universes version, this is not the case.

Let us first consider the many-domains version of the idea. It is not, as many suppose, a foolish or extravagant one. In fact, some of the kinds of theories that fundamental physicists think about nowadays actually imply that the universe must have domains. In such theories the different domains can differ radically from each other, with even different kinds of particles and different forces. Thus it is not unreasonable to suppose that a many-domains version of the Weak Anthropic Principle might turn out to be the explanation for some of the anthropic coincidences. Nevertheless, I do not believe that this would subtract much from the force of the anthropic coincidences as evidence for purpose in the universe. The reason is simple. The whole point of the anthropic coincidences is that the laws of physics have to be very special to allow life to exist. But this requirement is not avoided by the many-domains idea, for the laws of physics also have to be very special to give rise to a universe with domains, especially domains of a sufficiently rich variety to do what the Weak Anthropic Principle demands of them.

One can illustrate the point by means of a rather whimsical analogy. Suppose you were looking for a specific obscure recipe for, say, goulash. If the first book you took at random from the cooking shelf of the library happened to have exactly that recipe, you would regard it as a great coincidence. If you then discovered that the book contained *every* recipe for goulash ever invented, you would cease to regard it as coincidental that it had the one of particular interest to you. But you would be surprised nonetheless, for one does not expect a cookbook to treat that particular category of food so comprehensively. The fact that it happened to be so comprehensive in its selection of goulash, when it was goulash that you needed, would itself count as a remarkable coincidence.

Likewise, it is not something to be taken for granted that the universe would have as many domains as needed for the anthropic coincidences to seem unsurprising. On the contrary, in the kinds of theories physicists have found reason to study, the universe is not nearly so inclusive. True, some of those theories suggest that the universe has domains, but they typically realize only a few possibilities, not the vast smorgasbord of possibilities needed to explain *all* of the many anthropic coincidences that have been identified.

The many-universes version of the anthropic principle is in a way simpler. In the many-domains idea, one has to account for the domains by a physical mechanism. Consequently the laws of physics have to be "engineered," as it were, to produce a universe with a sufficiently rich variety of domains. In the many-universes idea, on the other hand, it is simply posited that many types of universe exist. What types of universe exist and what types do not? That is not a question that the laws of physics can possibly answer, since each universe has *ex hypothesi* its *own* laws of physics. If some kinds of universe exist while others do not, it would seem to suggest that Someone has made choices. Far from destroying the case that a cosmic Designer exists, the many-universes idea only strengthens it.

A last-ditch way out for the opponents of cosmic design would be to say that *all* conceivable universes exist, i.e., any universe that is logically and mathematically self-consistent actually exists. This idea has a breathtaking simplicity. It would explain existence: to exist is to be self-consistent. It would remove the need for a Designer or a Creator. Whereas the "unique laws of physics" idea got rid of a Designer by saying that there are no choices for a Designer to make as there is only one real possibility, here the Designer is eliminated by saying that there are infinitely many possibilities, but that no one has selected among them.

There is, however, a fatal problem with this way of getting rid of the cosmic Designer. It cannot explain why we live in a universe that is so astonishingly lawful. Among all the logically possible universes, ones that have the perfection of order and lawfulness that ours displays are highly exceptional, just as among all possible rocks, a perfect gem that has absolutely no flaws in it is almost infinitely unlikely. Why doesn't our universe exhibit occasional departures from its regularities—the regularities we call the laws of physics—just as gem-

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stones have occasional departures from their regularities? No answer to this is possible. If all possible universes exist, it becomes a tremendous miracle that we live in a universe of perfect, or nearly perfect, lawfulness. It is a miracle, in other words, that miracles do not occur around us all the time.

The Weak Anthropic Principle, whether in its many-universes or many-domains versions, cannot succeed in explaining the anthropic coincidences away or making them any less coincidental. In the final analysis one cannot escape from two very basic facts: the laws of nature did not have to be as they are; and the laws of nature had to be very special in form if life were to be possible. In my view these facts lend themselves most naturally to a religious interpretation. Certainly, they tend to undercut the claim so often confidently made by materialists that the discoveries of science point to a universe without meaning or purpose, in which man is an accidental by-product.

Having said all this, we remain with a question very troubling to many: Why is the universe so big? How can we claim to be important in a universe that dwarfs us in its scales of space and time? There is at least a paradox here. It is a paradox that was not lost upon the Psalmist, who exclaimed, "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

One answer, of course, is the traditional one. The universe was not made only for our benefit. As the Psalmist also said, "the heavens proclaim the glory of God." If it is the glory of God that they proclaim, then there is no particular reason why they should have to be made to human scale. In fact, in the fifteenth century Nicolas of Cusa argued that only a universe of infinite extent would be worthy of the Creator and able to manifest His glory.

The traditional answer is a good one, but there may be another. It turns out that the very age and vastness of the universe may have an "anthropic" significance. Life emerged in our universe in a way that required great stretches of time. As we have seen, most of the elements needed for life were made deep in stars. Those stars had to explode to disperse those elements and make them available before life could even begin to evolve. That whole process alone required billions of years. The evolution of human life from those elements required billions of years more. Thus, the briefness of human lifespans and even of human history compared with the age of the universe may simply be a matter of physical necessity, given the developmental way that God seems to prefer to work. It takes longer for a tree to grow to maturity than the fruit of the tree lasts. It took much longer for the universe to grow to maturity than we last.

Physics can also suggest why the universe has to be so large. The laws of gravity discovered by Einstein relate the size of the universe directly to its age. The fact that the universe is many billions of light-years across is related to the fact that it has lasted several billions of years. Perhaps we would be less daunted by a cozy little universe the size, say, of a continent. But such a universe would have lasted only a few milliseconds. Even a universe the size of the solar system would have lasted only a few hours. A universe constructed in such a way as to evolve life may well have had to extend widely in space as well as in time. It may well be that the frightening expanses that are so often said to be a sign of human insignificance may actually, like so many other features of our strange universe, point to man, as they also proclaim the glory of God. FT

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Serpents, Doves, and Abortion

Carson Holloway

James K. Fitzpatrick's "A Pro-Life Loss of Nerve?" (FT, December 2000) identifies and addresses a weakness in the pro-life position: the apparent gap between what pro-lifers say abortion is and how they respond to it. While opponents of abortion insist that it is the unjust taking of innocent life, they at the same time condemn the use of violence as a means of preventing abortion. This seems inconsistent, Fitzpatrick notes, because everyone, including pro-life activists, would presumably praise the use of lethal violence to save innocent lives in other circumstances, for example, in the case of a murderer loose in a maternity ward. Yet if the unborn fetus is innocent human life no less than the born child, why should it be praiseworthy to use violence to save the one and not the other?

Fitzpatrick rightly notes the insufficiency of the typical pro-life responses to this charge of inconsistency, namely, that Christians reject violence and that violence cannot solve anything. Of course Christian moral teaching does allow for the use of violence as a response to grave injustice in some circumstances, and of course such action often can solve problems. In light of the unpersuasiveness of the common pro-life responses to this charge of inconsistency, one might suspect some unworthy motive, such as cowardice—the prospect of a long prison sentence—or hypocrisy—a lack of conviction that abortion really is as grave an evil as we say.

Fitzpatrick, however, dismisses these possible explanations, defending the integrity of the pro-life position by contending that its rejection of violence arises from a correct intuition that "it is impermissible to employ lethal force against our fellow citizens unless and until they have become incorrigible criminals, contemptible individuals deserving of an application of force to halt their ongoing iniquities." We rightly judge, he suggests, that those implicated in abortion are not such evil people. The fetus is a human person, but it is not *self-evidently* a human person, Fitzpatrick contends, and therefore those who approve of and take part in its destruction cannot justly be blamed as willful murderers. Without surrendering the pro-life position that the human fetus deserves protection as innocent life, Fitzpatrick endorses the notion that abortion is a question over which good people can disagree.

Fitzpatrick is to be commended for addressing this difficult question, and for doing so in a way that seeks to be both principled as well as charitable to the opponents and defenders of abortion alike. Nevertheless, serious problems attend his position. In what follows I seek to identify these problems and to offer an alternative account of why pro-lifers do not and should not advocate the use of violence against abortionists.

One may note at the outset that Fitzpatrick's explanation and justification of the pro-life rejection of violence is based upon very subjective considerations. On his account, it is defensible not in terms of the reality of abortion itself, but instead in terms of our perception of the perpetrators of abortion. Indeed, the subjectivity goes even further: rejection of violence follows rightly from our perception of the abortionists' perception of abortion.

The perception of honest error upon which Fitzpatrick stakes his argument, however, is far from obviously accurate. Some who are directly implicated in abortion may act as they do even though they know full well that the fetus is a human life, either from callous indifference or from a kind of weakness, a fear of the

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difficult consequences that will attend bringing the child to term. In fact, in recent years some of the public advocates of abortion have advanced the argument that the fetus is a human being and that abortion should be permitted anyway. Others implicated in this evil might possess a real conviction that the fetus is not a human life with rights that must be respected, but their error on this point might itself stem from a kind of negligence, an unwillingness to give this serious and controversial question the careful consideration it manifestly deserves. Still others are probably in the position of honest error attributed generally to the supporters of abortion by Fitzpatrick. Most likely abortion in America arises from some combination of deliberate evil, culpable ignorance, and honest error, and thus Fitzpatrick is too charitable in attributing it only to the last cause.

Even if his charitable assumption is right, however, that cannot truly explain why we should not use violence against those who take part in abortion. Fitzpatrick suggests that we should refrain from violence because the perpetrators of abortion, being sincerely misled, are not "deserving" of an application of force to stop them. Yet while lack of knowledge is a legitimate reason to mitigate or eliminate punishment for evils committed, Fitzpatrick's argument addresses the use of violence as a means of *preventing*, not punishing, abortion, and the standards for using violence to prevent evil appear to be quite different from those governing its use to punish.

Paradoxically, it can be permissible and even right to use lethal force against people who in no way can be said to deserve it. For example, we accept civilian casualties through "collateral damage" in war, so long as they are not deliberately intended but instead arise indirectly though necessarily from legitimate attempts to get at combatants. Similarly, it may be acceptable to use violence against those who, through their own subjective misunderstanding of the evil they are about to commit, cannot be said to "deserve" to be subjected to such violence. Consider Fitzpatrick's own example of a person killing babies in a maternity ward. What if such a person were insane, so deluded that he was honestly convinced that the babies were actually ferocious animals about to attack him? Such a person would not deserve death but pity. Yet it would still be right to use force to stop him because of the objective gravity of the evil he was committing, regardless of his subjective lack of evil intent.

In addition to being unable persuasively to account for why one ought not use violence as a way to stop abortion, Fitzpatrick's account has dangerous implications, for it points to a kind of preemptive surrender in the face even of ever increasing evils. Again, it cannot be right, he contends, to resort to "forceful confrontation" so long as those committing the evils are in honest error, that is, so long as the nature of the deed is not evident to them. The social compact is not sufficiently debased by the gravity of the evils themselves to justify violence, and could only be so debased if the people perpetrating these evils saw them as evil and chose them nonetheless. This implies, however, that the state of society may be able to sink much lower than it already has, that the murderousness of which abortion is one manifestation will be able to spread considerably, and the social compact will still not be considered sufficiently debased to justify violence.

For example, on Fitzpatrick's argument we may be required patiently to endure infanticide and involuntary euthanasia as well. Here's the argument people will use, one that will be plausible enough to trigger Fitzpatrick's interpretational charity: it is the capacity for rational speech and moral choice that distinguishes human beings from the lower animals. But infants, children, the comatose, and the debilitated all lack these distinctly human capacities or possess them only in an impaired way. Thus they are not fully human, and therefore killing them might not always be wrong. For the patient Fitzpatrick, since it is not evident (to some) that such actions are evil, presumably for society to permit such practices would not require a violent response among those, like Fitzpatrick, for whom the evil is evident. Indeed, the people who advocate such things may well be honestly convinced of the goodness and compassion of what they are doing. In sum, while explicitly adopting the view that force is a legitimate response to sufficiently grave evils, Fitzpatrick's argument implicitly all but destroys the possibility of ever justifying force in practice by requiring that the malefactors who will be on the receiving end of that force be driven by a full recognition of the evil nature of their actions, a recognition that probably seldom drives any real human being and that perhaps cannot charitably be attributed to anyone.

In light of these difficulties, it seems necessary to seek some other reasons why pro-lifers do not and should not turn to violence. The possibilities I explore point us back in the direction of the alternatives rejected by Fitzpatrick: cowardice and hypocrisy. I do *not* contend that these vices are the sources of the pro-life rejection of violence. Rather, I argue that adherence to peaceful means is required by some perhaps inglorious, but nonetheless necessary and respectable, virtues that may unjustly be mistaken for cowardice and hypocrisy.

Fitzpatrick raises the possibility that pro-lifers do not use violence because they are deterred by the "prospect of a long prison sentence." He dismisses this possibility, saying that pro-lifers "are not usually thought to lack courage." Obviously a long prison sentence is not a

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pleasant prospect, and under ordinary circumstances any sensible person would want to avoid it and would refrain from the actions that might lead to it. Thus to suggest, as Fitzpatrick does, that it would be cowardice to refrain from such actions in the case of preventing abortion implies that it is courageous (and not foolhardy) to take them on.

Fitzpatrick speaks of "the duty to save innocent lives at risk." I certainly do not deny that such a duty exists, but I wonder if it exists in such an unqualified way as Fitzpatrick's argument implies. It is not obvious that the duty to save innocent lives at risk obligates us to act when the risk to ourselves is very great. If Fitzpatrick's killer in the maternity ward had not a meat cleaver but a machine gun, and the bystander were unarmed, then intervention could reasonably be supposed to result in nothing but the latter's death in addition to that of the other victims. Is there an obligation to intervene in such a case? In fact, this situation is more analogous to the one confronted by the pro-life activist. The person in Fitzpatrick's example will, if he succeeds, be treated as a hero, and almost certainly not be prosecuted, while the pro-lifer who successfully uses violence to prevent an abortion will almost certainly face life in prison or perhaps even execution.

Fitzpatrick recognizes these differences, but he dismisses them as unworthy of entering into the pro-lifer's calculations. Again, this implies that we are obligated to act to save the innocent even when the risks to ourselves are grave. I think that this is not the case, even according to the very lofty standards of Christian morality that many pro-lifers profess. As Augustine points out, the Great Commandment instructs us to love not only God and neighbor but also, implicitly, ourselves. No doubt a self-love that makes us indifferent to the plight of the unborn is disordered and excessive, but one can be very far from indifferent to their plight, can in fact go very far in acting on their behalf, without going so far as sacrificing life or freedom to save them. To be sure, Christ observes that "a greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." Yet surely this, like his comments on poverty and celibacy, is more a counsel of perfection than a statement of a duty.

The matter is further complicated by the fact that pro-lifers often have obligations of justice to others, the fulfillment of which would be rendered impossible, or at least placed in serious jeopardy, by such risky action in defense of the unborn. Many have explicitly promised to stay with and care for spouses and have implicitly undertaken the same obligations with regard to the children they have called into existence. Aquinas suggests that the order of charity requires that we care first for ourselves and our own, and in that light it might not even be permissible, let alone obligatory, for such persons to act outside the law to save the innocent, any more than it would be permissible for a married man to take a vow of celibacy or for a father a vow of poverty.

In sum, when many pro-lifers refrain from violence in defense of the unborn, they may well do so out of a fear of punishment, and do so rightly. This is not the vice of cowardice but an important virtue that superficially resembles it: prudent self-love. I hasten to add, however, that this is not the best reason for rejecting violence in this cause. Considered only up to this point, my argument could be understood to suggest that the use of violence is a kind of heroic risk-taking that, while it is not obligatory for anyone and not permissible for many, is nonetheless noble in those who may undertake it. This is not what I intend to argue, and it is therefore necessary to proceed to another reason for rejecting violence in this cause.

Consider the following famous exchange from Robert Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons*, in which Thomas More's son-in-law encourages him to use his authority to punish a man guilty of real evil that is nonetheless not forbidden by law.

> Alice: While you talk, he's gone!
> More: And go he should, if he was the Devil himself, until he broke the law.
> Roper: So now you'd give the Devil benefit of law!
> More: Yes. What would you do? Cut a great road through the law to get after the Devil?
> Roper: I'd cut down every law in England to do that!
> More: Oh? And when the last law was down, and the Devil turned round on you—where would you hide Roper, the laws all being flat? This country's planted thick with laws from coast to coast—man's laws, not God's—and if you cut them down—and you're just the man to do it—d'you really think you could stand upright in the winds that would blow then? Yes, I'd give the Devil benefit of law, for my own safety's sake.

More's concluding comment frames the issue in terms of self-interest and therefore seems to recall the argument based on prudent self-regard advanced above. Nevertheless, his point clearly has wider, and more public-spirited, implications: *no one* could stand in the winds that would blow once the laws were all down, no matter in how good a cause the cutting had been done. Hence our respect for the law, even when it shelters evil, is necessary not only for our own self-

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preservation, but also for the protection of all other members of the community who are guilty of no crime.

I would contend, then, that violence in opposition to abortion ought to be rejected because the use of such violence, even though intended to save innocent lives, threatens to create a situation in which innocent life is even less secure than it is currently. The law, tragically and inexcusably, does not protect fetal human life. But we must ask whether that neglect authorizes private persons to exercise lethal force to prevent the evil. To answer affirmatively and to act accordingly would be effectively to destroy the social compact, in practice to authorize every citizen to kill to prevent whatever each one takes to be an injustice insufficiently addressed by law. If pro-lifers publicly assert and act on a right to kill abortionists, what is to stop their example from spreading to other activists for other causes, perhaps not as worthy, but nonetheless felt as worthy by those who profess them? If pro-lifers set the precedent, is it not to be expected that environmentalists, and animal rights activists, and population controllers, and euthanasiasts will follow it? Simply put, the private use of violence even in defense of innocent life will likely result in practice in rapidly growing anarchy, and hence in the untold loss of innocent life. This is not to oppose civil disobedience, a tactic which all these groups, including pro-lifers, have used. But civil disobedience, to remain "civil," must be nonviolent.

In order to achieve the good of national peace, then, we should be willing to coexist for a time with the evil of abortion. This, however, is emphatically not a case of *doing* evil that good may come, but merely of tolerating an evil for fear of an even worse evil; and much of traditional Christian moral teaching indicates that our leeway in considering consequences is much greater when our actions are not causing the evil directly. Thus, for example, a nation could not morally commit genocide to solve even the most serious problems, but it could legitimately decline to intervene to stop another nation's genocide out of a reasonable fear that such an effort would in fact cause the genocide to spread. Indeed, the pro-life rejection of violence rests on even stronger grounds than these, for it is not so much a tolerance of the evil—after all, pro-lifers are and should be committed to doing everything possible within the law to bring the practice to a halt—as an unwillingness to resort to the most radical means to stop it.

One might contend that this argument is marred by one of the defects that I earlier attributed to Fitzpatrick's, specifically, that it represents a preemptive surrender to all manner of future evil. After all, if the killing of innocent babies will not provoke us to sever the social compact and risk plunging the nation into civil war, what will? Are we not, on my argument, committed to enduring every possible future evil out of a fear of the worse evils that might result from using force to resist them?

Here I would revert to the previously mentioned distinction between tolerating evils and doing them. If the state were to compel our direct cooperation in evil actions, then perhaps a violent reaction would be justified. Even then, however, a violent reaction might be permissible but not obligatory: surely it would be as principled simply to refuse cooperation and suffer the punishment accordingly. In any case, it would no longer be possible for the adherents of the culture of life to avoid actions that threaten to land them in jail or worse.

It seems, then, that we should refrain from using violence against those involved in abortion not because they do not deserve it (though of course we should in Christian charity assume that they do not), and not because of the fear of punishment (though such fear is not in itself dishonorable in this case), but instead because of the even worse public consequences that would follow from the use of such means. It is at this point, I think, that we turn back in the direction of something that resembles hypocrisy as intimately related to the pro-life position on this question. Again, I contend not that hypocrisy is in fact involved, but a virtue that can be mistaken for hypocrisy.

That virtue might be called discretion or guardedness about the true grounds of our position. Consider the difficulties that would attend revealing with perfect clarity the best argument for rejecting violence against abortionists. That argument, as presented above, holds not that it is wrong in itself to use violence in this cause, but instead that it is wrong because of its consequences, or, to put it another way, that refusal to use violence arises not from an absolute rejection of violence but from a calculation that violence is improper in these circumstances.

But this is as much as to reveal that one would use violence in some circumstances. Indeed, if the law protected fetal life as fully as any other human life, I dare say that most pro-lifers would be willing to use violence to save the unborn in the case of an intransigent abortionist planning an imminent abortion that could be stopped in no other way. In such a situation, as in Fitzpatrick's hypothetical, the law and society would approve our action after the fact, and so we would confront no harmful consequences either for ourselves personally by incurring punishment or for society as a whole by breaking the social compact. To reveal this position clearly would no doubt be scandalous to most Americans and therefore harmful to the pro-life cause. Hence it is not surprising that most pro-life leaders have to resort to unsatisfactory but publicly reassuring arguments for their rejection of violence.

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The question, just raised, of what the situation might be in a nation that did forbid and punish abortion points us to another problem with the pro-life position, one that also requires what might look like hypocrisy or dishonesty, but which, again, could be viewed as a kind of prudent guardedness and misdirection. This problem is raised by Fitzpatrick but never addressed by him: Is it not contradictory, as those opposed to the pro-life movement point out, to contend that abortion is murder and at the same time to deny that we would punish those involved in it as murderers or accessories to murder, just as we would someone implicated in the killing of a child?

One can render the apparent hypocrisy even more extreme. Most who profess to believe that abortion is the taking of innocent life would likely be willing to embrace a law that provided no other punishment for it than the loss of the physician's medical license. The pro-lifer will no doubt intuit that such a law would be desirable as a step in the right direction. At the same time, however, he would have to admit that it still tends to devalue the life of the unborn. For we would then be jailing or executing those who kill humans outside the womb but only lightly chastising those who kill them in the womb.

It is, in this light, quite easy to charge pro-lifers with hypocrisy, and it is, again, not so easy to respond to the charge without resorting to something that looks like deception. When confronted with the charge of hypocrisy in this situation, the pro-lifer is faced with two equally problematic responses. On the one hand, he could simply lie, denying that the fetus deserves the same protection in law as anyone else, asserting that his position is in fact that the fetus deserves only this much more protection than it is currently getting, and that is all: this mild punishment is as far as we should go. This response suffers from the twofold problem of being immoral on its own terms, since it involves telling a falsehood, as well as foreclosing the possibility of future greater protection for the unborn.

On the other hand, one could frankly admit the truth of one's position: we accept this law only as a step toward the complete criminalization of abortion. If one takes this position, it follows that once we get where we intend to take the country, abortion will be recognized as homicide and punished accordingly. This response has the virtue of being honest, if indeed that is one's position, but it suffers from the bad practical consequence of so provoking public opinion as to make impossible even the modest increase in protection for the fetus that one hopes to achieve.

Hence the need when confronted with such a question for the pro-lifer who holds that position to respond with discretion. If pressed with the argument that pro-life principles imply a more radical policy than that currently being advocated, one might simply stand on something like this: I have not advocated and do not now advocate such a policy. This response has the advantage of not revealing the politically problematic full truth while not falling into falsehood either. It is the truth, but not the whole truth. It is no denial that one would someday, in better circumstances, advocate the more uncompromising policy.

No doubt this will appear to many as merely tired Clintonian equivocation rendered more palatable only by being placed in the service of a good cause. We should recognize, however, that such equivocation or guardedness, such misdirection, has had some very respectable practitioners who have used it in some very good causes.

Abraham Lincoln, in arguing against slavery, responded in such a manner to those who tried to attribute to him more radical purposes. To those who said that his critique of slavery on the basis of the principles of equality found in the Declaration of Independence implied not only that slavery was wrong, but also that blacks should vote, Lincoln responded that such a proposal was not practical and was not in fact what he advocated, thus avoiding the more difficult questions: whether his account of the Declaration in fact required such equality, and whether he thought giving blacks the right to vote really was desirable. Yet we know from his later career (in particular his effort to influence the drafting of the new Louisiana constitution) that he did think that blacks should be given the franchise.

Nor should such tactics be regarded as unworthy of a Christian statesman. Again, as Thomas More observes in Bolt's play, "God made the angels to show Him splendor—as He made animals for innocence and plants for their simplicity. But man He made to serve Him wittily, in the tangle of his mind." Abortion is a terrible evil, and we must fight it earnestly. But that fight, to be successful, requires more than earnestness. To live in this world and to combat its evils we must indeed be both wise as serpents and innocent as doves. FT

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The Seductions of Socrates

David K. O'Connor

Socrates died 2,400 years ago this June. More precisely, he was executed, a criminal condemned on a capital charge. How seriously Athens took her philosophers! It fills the modern scholar with envy more than dread, that one could die for such a cause. The formal charge that cost Socrates his life—"Socrates is guilty of not believing in the gods the city believes in, and of introducing other strange divinities; and he is guilty of corrupting the young"—has set philosophers to offering apologia ever since, as if in defending Socrates from this charge philosophy can define and understand itself. Yet it might be that Lady Philosophy protests too much, that two thousand years of self-defense might conceal (at least from the unobservant) an equal period of self-doubt. If Socrates' death had in it nothing but answers, it would by now be a historical curio, like similar tales in innumerable hagiographies. It is the questions about him and what he represented that keep his death alive.

He was a man of neither wealth nor personal beauty, the butt of the comedians of the day for his bulging eyes and swaggering gait. His fashion sense ran toward old clothes and bare feet. Even his admirers compared him to a satyr, an uncanny mixture of beast, man, and god. Yet this man, as famous then for ugliness as leading ladies are now for beauty, has been the Helen of philosophy. He launched a thousand ships, and his rival suitors have long been fighting an often bitter war hoping to take secure possession of him. Most of the major philosophical schools during the first six centuries after his death traced their origins to Socrates, and vigorously disputed other claimants to the Socratic legacy. Stoics, Skeptics, and Cynics all proudly claimed him as their founder and looked to him as their exemplary sage. The millennium and a half that followed, dominated by Christendom and then the "new science," displaced him with other exemplars, but the Socrates Wars broke out in earnest again during the last two centuries.

The Enlightenment found in him a hero and martyr of autonomous reason, while Romanticism felt the burn of his old flame when it rediscovered irony as a privileged vehicle of philosophy. Even today these are the two interpretive camps with which the still disputing heirs affiliate. It is not the worst way to gauge whether philosophers are "analytic" or "continental" to ask them what they find most attractive in Socrates. In Anglo-American circles, the saint of reason is regnant; elsewhere Socrates wears the crown of the Compleat Ironist whose ruthless dialectic exposes the ways reason must inevitably undermine or (we might as well say it) deconstruct itself. Books and articles continue to accumulate, the love letters of the scholarly caste. This, too, is a love letter.

Socrates had other ways to express his loves, and wrote no books. Our experience of him and his ideas depends almost entirely on the writings of three of his contemporaries, two admirers and one detractor. All three wrote in genres bound to frustrate every foursquare scholar's desire to pluck out the heart of the mystery of the historical Socrates. Our oldest major source comes from the detractor, Aristophanes, the greatest comic dramatist of the ancient world. His caricature of Socrates in the *Clouds*, produced in 423 B.C., when Aristophanes was about thirty and Socrates in his mid-forties, is the only substantial source we have that was written by someone who knew Socrates but was not

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one of his devoted companions. This makes it a precious document. Many scholars dismiss it and are offended by what they take to be the manifest unfairness of Aristophanes' portrait of Socrates. Indeed, Aristophanes' portrait is unflattering, as would be expected of a comic caricature. But a caricature cannot have its intended effect unless its exaggerations are also revealing. The works of Plato and Xenophon, Socrates' two greatest literary admirers, are full of thoughtful responses to Aristophanes that show they took the critique in the *Clouds* with great seriousness.

Plato and Xenophon were both brilliant young men who fell under Socrates' spell when they were teenagers and Socrates himself was well into his fifties. Their writings on Socrates belong to the genre Aristotle called "Socratic discourses." (Aristotle, by the way, adds a few crumbs of Socratic lore that may be independent of our other surviving sources.) This genre coalesced after Socrates' execution when a number of his companions (among whom Plato and Xenophon were relatively junior) began to memorialize his life and conversations, usually in dialogues. Alas, little survives of these Socratic discourses besides those of Plato and Xenophon. We can plausibly reconstruct two Socratic dialogues by another companion of Socrates, Aeschines of Sphettus, probably written in the first decade or so after Socrates' execution; that is all. Still, we know enough about how the writings in this genre were composed to see that they can be treated as historical sources only with great caution. Arnaldo Momigliano, one of the great classicists of the postwar era, put the point well when he said that Socratic discourses "occupy an ambiguous position between fact and imagination . . . directed toward capturing . . . not so much the real Socrates as the potential Socrates." Plato and Xenophon used Socrates as a character to reflect on Socrates' philosophical significance, not primarily to give a historical account of him.

Many a brave scholar has not let the literary character of our sources deter him from setting off in quest of the historical Socrates. None has yet set up a "Socrates Seminar" to separate the wheat of Socrates' real words from the chaff of the inventions of Aristophanes and Plato and Xenophon, but in principle such a thing is only a grant away from becoming a reality. Many factors conspire to make this quest more than a little quixotic. Scholars have often pressed their suits by trying to establish either Plato or Xenophon as a more reliable witness to the historical Socrates, which would at least simplify the interpretive task. In the nineteenth century, many argued for Xenophon, on the grounds that his other writings show him more of a willing historian than Plato. Recent suitors, every bit as ardent, have tended to argue that Plato is more reliable because he was a better philosopher than Xenophon, and so better able to appreciate the "true" Socrates.

One need not dispute, as well one might, the views of history and philosophy behind these positions to see that scholars here are sailing in a very leaky boat. We tilt at windmills if we expect Plato and Xenophon to abide by Ranke's nineteenth-century dictum that history report the past "just as it really was." These two literary giants understood their responsibilities differently. To think otherwise makes their decision to write *dialogues* look puzzling, not to say entirely perverse. Even worse, they are the dialogues of a man notorious for his irony, and Plato and Xenophon do not busy themselves much with telling us what is and is not to be taken as straight evidence. You might as well be handed a kaleidoscope when you had hoped for binoculars. As Ralph Waldo Emerson, one of the great Platonists of modern times, put it, "The historic facts are lost in the light of Plato's mind."

This quest has also often presupposed that the "true" Socrates will be found in the hobgoblin of *the* Socratic ethical theory. The great champion of this theory-seeking approach was the late Gregory Vlastos. Vlastos' intellectual and moral virtues earned him great influence in the American academy: he was a scholar of fine precision, invention, and tenacity, and a most generous and inspiring teacher. But none of our sources presents Socrates as constructing an ethical theory in the way that Aristotle, Epicurus, or the Stoics did. We always see Socrates addressing particular people with particular prejudices and motives, without ever attempting to articulate a theory, let alone *the* theory.

Even if Socrates did have such a theory, his place in the history of philosophy has little to do with it. His consistency was of a different order. It is his character that reminds you of nothing else, usurping the place of schools and theories. One sometimes feels that analyzing Socrates' arguments can make us forget really to listen to his conversation, which is the one thing needful. We run the risk of finding a Polonius rather than a Hamlet. Yet Socrates was not just one theory-monger among others. The representative man of a new way of life, his example shone so bright it eclipsed the influence of any mere theory he may have defended. Like the melancholy Dane or Goethe's Werther, the Platonic and Xenophontic Socrates was a man to be emulated, not a theory to be believed.

None of Socrates' suitors has yet succeeded in turning this beauty into a safe and domesticated bride. We can never see Helen's face directly. We appreciate her beauty best when we contemplate the thousand ships she launched.

During his life Socrates attracted a motley crowd of suitors from throughout the Greek world. Plenty of

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them were mere eccentrics. Superficial imitators, they aped Socrates' uncouth dress and made rude attempts to copy his urbane if sometimes irritating examinations of his fellow citizens, turning themselves into little more than public scolds. Their nicknames tell us something of what they must have been, hanging like spaniels at the master's heels: Chaerephon "The Bat," a squeaky partisan of democracy; Aristodemus "The Shrimp," a tiny atheist and bohemian; Apollodorus "The Weaky," a voluble sort given to showering his friends with equal measures of tears and abuse. Socrates was also surrounded and pursued by accomplished intellectuals of various stripes, geometers and tragedians and natural scientists. Even the ancient world's great media consultants, for whom time was money (some things never change), men like Gorgias and Protagoras, enjoyed his bantering ways and had a healthy appreciation, not unmixed with fear, for his dialectical skill.

But if eccentrics and intellectuals had exhausted the ranks of Socrates' lovers, he would not have ended up dying the most famous of all philosophical deaths. He came to the judicial attention of Athens because he was so attractive to a type of energetic young man whose political ambition was stronger than his sense of moral restraint. I take political ambition to be the defining characteristic of Socrates' most interesting admirers. Such men saw something in Socrates that corresponded to their own aspirations. But *what* did they see?

It helps to start with Socrates' critics rather than his admirers. The most important "criticisms" of which we have record are the formal charges brought against him, and the prosecutors (Anytus, Meletus, and Lycon) were the most deadly serious critics. They charged Socrates with "introducing strange divinities" and with "corrupting the young." These are not two separate charges, but aspects of the same charge. Socrates' "strange divinities" are a crucial part of the story of how he influenced ambitious young men, and the heart of his mystery lies here.

Socrates claimed to have a divine something that gave him unerring advice, a sort of voice that came to him off and on, usually to dissuade him from some course of action. Often enough, it also gave a warning concerning one of his associates. The ancient Greeks were used to the idea that the gods give signs of the providential structure of the cosmos, but they were not used to a claim like this, and when he referred to it at his trial, it provoked an uproar. The jury thought Socrates was boasting, or in the lovely Greek idiom, "talking big." This direct line to divine instruction exceeded anything the Greeks expected from prophets, oracles, or other diviners. The very sons of the gods in the Greek foundation myths never had so much access to the Chief Executive. Reading the divine purpose in the entrails of a sacrificed beast or in the flights of birds of prey, or sifting the dark utterances that came from Delphi's smoky chair: this was the burden of indirection and obscurity the Greeks expected from their divine communications. As Heraclitus said, Zeus neither speaks nor is silent; he merely gives a sign.

Interpreters ancient and modern have tried to make something less uncanny of this prophetic gift of Socrates. The contemporary tendency is to see it as a kind of epistemological hiccup, interrupting the otherwise smooth expression of Socratic rationalism. This makes of the divine voice a charming personal quirk, like that of a physicist who reads the horoscope. The more interesting attempts to make Socrates' uncanniness tractable do not follow this path of trivializing his prophetic side. They try rather to naturalize it, so that the divine voice becomes an aspect of Socrates' psychological faculties rather than a theophany.

Aristophanes' *Clouds* makes no mention of his access to "strange divinities," but it does present Socrates as an impious inquirer into nature after the fashion of other natural philosophers of the day. He contemplates "the things beneath the earth and the things in the heavens," and looks down on merely human affairs with smug contempt. This Socrates denies the existence of the gods, or at least of gods who take any providential interest in humans, and shows no interest in any of the questions about virtue and community life so characteristic of the Platonic and Xenophontic Socrates. The only access to novel divinities in this portrait of Socrates comes through philosophic insight, which anyone of the right intellectual talent might have. Aristophanes' Socrates inspires ambitious young men to live according to nature, understood in light of this denial of the gods' concern for human affairs. The natural standard that comes to light can hardly distinguish beast from man or man from god, and licenses the most appalling excesses of incest and patricide, as if setting loose the Oedipus in us all.

Perhaps the most influential development of this naturalizing approach to Socrates' weird wisdom came from the Stoics. They too saw the ideal wise person as someone who lived according to nature. But of course they believed nature had a rational and moral deep structure. Like Heraclitus, they identified this structure with the will of Zeus, and made knowledge of it the central achievement of their ideal sage. The sage's penetration of the rational plan of the cosmos would give him the power to interpret the significance of otherwise mundane happenings. Their example was a sage knowing when it was time for him to die; a simple event like stubbing his toe might serve him as a definitive sign. This was the Stoics' version of the instruction Socrates received from the divine voice not to prepare

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a defense speech. There can be no better test of a claim to special knowledge than the claim to know when to die. But the Stoics did not conceive of such knowledge as a unique prophetic gift, as both Plato and Xenophon did. They naturalized Socrates' divine sign, reducing it to the discernment that was the natural attainment of the ideal wise person. All reason, no faith.

Many contemporary scholars consider Aristophanes' portrait of Socrates as a natural philosopher to be a total fabrication. This rejection is much too hasty, and makes very selective use of the sources. It is true that Plato and Xenophon denied that Socrates pursued natural science in the manner of his philosophical predecessors. But they also portrayed him as having an expert acquaintance with the main theories of his day. Furthermore, the cosmological interests ascribed to Socrates in the *Clouds* are corroborated by Socrates' account of his intellectual autobiography in Plato's *Phaedo*.

Still, Plato and Xenophon did not put natural science at the center of Socrates' philosophical activity. It is possible that this difference between Aristophanes' portrait and the later portraits reflects a historical change in Socrates' own interests: he may have been much more involved with speculation in natural science and metaphysics earlier in his life. For what it is worth—and it is not worth very much—this is the story the ancient biographical tradition tells.

At any rate, Plato and especially Xenophon presented Socrates' attitude to natural science as the antithesis to the atheistic naturalism of the Socrates of the *Clouds*. Their Socrates instead criticizes materialist explanations of the cosmos, insisting that a better explanation must appeal to mind and divine purposes. Xenophon tried to show that Socrates' emphasis on providence had good moral effects on his companions. Socrates' belief in a providentially ordered cosmos seems to have been a primary impetus for the Stoics' development of their own providential cosmology. Indeed, through the Stoics, Socrates' emphasis on providence may have had a formative influence in natural philosophy on a par with the more celebrated and better documented Socratic turn in ethics and politics.

I have said the Stoics naturalized Socrates' divine voice by making it an aspect of his rational faculties. They are the ancestors of the modern attempts to make of Socrates' prophetic gift a safe domestic in the house of reason. It was the great virtue of Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) to see the superficiality of such domestications, and to challenge them by considering Socrates against the background of Greek tragedy. In the end Nietzsche was a naturalizer, too, since he identified the divine voice with instinct. But he put us, the heirs of enlightened rationalism and romantic irony, back on the right track. Nietzsche retrieved the *religious* aspect of tragedy from every kind of moralizing (especially Aristotle's), and in the process gave us the clue to retrieving the uncanniness of Socrates from the rationalists and the ironists.

Nietzsche believed the generation that fell in love with Socrates had a fundamentally different experience of tragedy from earlier Athenians. Tragedy's original audience experienced the awful spectacle of King Oedipus as an affirmation of human greatness, not as an occasion of pity. The very moment Oedipus met his fated destruction revealed the depth of his self-reliant character. Undone from the outside by the touch of the divine, Oedipus did not "deserve" his fate; who does? He simply lived it. No one expected his suffering to be proportionate to his guilt. Cheerfully, the tragic audience accepted Oedipus' destruction as the cost of his intimacy with the divine. But tragedy began to die, Nietzsche argued, when there arose in the new generation a new need, a need for life to be "intelligible"—that is, to be moralized—for it to be tolerable. Oedipus crucified became a scandal. Among the first fruits of this new sensibility was Aristotle's account of tragedy, where the engine of destruction cannot be external to the agent, and so must reside in some mistake or flaw. The hunger for poetic justice supplants the taste for tragedy.

In Nietzsche's telling, the healthy Greeks of the earlier tragic age had seen in Oedipus a representative of the highest attainment possible for their own character, a noble self-trust and independence that was at once the essence of genius, of virtue, and of life. They realized it was not truculent willfulness that had driven Oedipus to save Thebes and destroy its king; it was the law of his being. Character teaches above our wills, and is not whimsical but fatal. The new generation could no longer identify with this bold self-reliance. Always peeping timidly over their shoulders, they sicklied over every action with the pale cast of thought.

In Nietzsche's view, Socrates was the type of these new men who had no stomach for tragedy. The new neediness found its confirmation in the preposterous relation between Socrates' rational faculties and his allegedly divine voice, which was nothing other than the voice of instinct. "Instinctive wisdom makes its appearance in this entirely abnormal nature," wrote Nietzsche, "only to oppose and *thwart* here and there what is consciously being considered. While in all productive people instinct is the creative-affirmative power, and consciousness makes itself critical and dissuasive, instinct becomes in Socrates the critic, consciousness the creator." This Socratic inversion of thought and instinct was received with passionate gratitude by a generation lacking the ambitious self-confidence to identify with Oedipus. No longer trusting themselves, they were only too happy to imitate a man

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who lived by the maxim that the unexamined life was not worth living. Three parts cowardice for every part of wisdom, this commitment to ceaseless examination would prove, Nietzsche believed, more of an aversion to life than a spur to it.

Nietzsche's provocative analysis changed the terms of the quest for Socrates in two crucial ways. First, he asked what made an audience receptive to Socrates, rather than just what positions he defended, focusing on Socrates as a Helen, or in Nietzsche's image, a pied piper. Second, he saw that Socrates responded to specifically religious anxieties of the sort that tragedy explored. But the limitations of this story are also clear enough. Nietzsche's account of Socrates' young audience is better at describing late-nineteenth-century intellectuals than the actual young men portrayed by Plato and Xenophon. Nietzsche hardly mentions political ambition in his account, while Plato and Xenophon mention it constantly. They show us a number of young men who explicitly, and rather tactlessly, expect Socrates to bend his prophetic gift to their own purpose. This purpose, as Socrates often forces them to acknowledge more openly than they would like, is to wield absolute political power. They aspire to be kings, and may be willing to settle for being tyrants. We must be careful here not to moralize more quickly than Socrates did. He enjoyed these high ambitions. Plato has Socrates suggest that the same endowments of intellect and temperament that fit people for philosophy may also incline them to tyranny. (Even in our own day, we in philosophy departments do not find we recruit all our most promising students from among the Eagle Scouts. Some actually admit under questioning their desire to go to law school.)

The young men who became enamored of Socrates were every bit as self-confident and ambitious, as "instinctive" and celebratory of their own prospects in life, as Sophocles' threatened heroes. And like those heroes, they wondered how to make human strength effective in a world suffused with the obscure and sometimes hostile purposes of gods. In this world, King Oedipus and his bleeding eyes stand as a fitting image of the collision of human ambition with divine limits. Socrates fascinated the promising young men of Athens because he seemed to have the cure for the tragic predicament that plagued Oedipus, the plague of ambition that reaches beyond where one's knowledge can grasp. They had no wish to suffer with Oedipus the humiliating ordeal of discovering their ignorance on an unforgiving public stage. They wanted from Socrates what tragic heroes so often want and so rarely get from their own prophets and oracles: sure knowledge of how to pursue their projects successfully. This is what they thought they saw.

But of course it was a mirage, so much false water in a desert of fate. Socrates exploited their hopes, and let some of the most promising believe his prophetic gift might be put at their disposal. Only when they were thoroughly seduced did this philosophical Helen reveal that their hopes would not find consummation. What his strange god had to offer was much the same Delphic wisdom that tragedy itself presented, the old story of ambition's limits. As is understandable, not everyone responded well to these dashed expectations. Rich young men have never been pleased to discover their poverty. Some became convinced Socrates was a contemptible chatterer, good for nothing but whispering in corners with little boys. But others, their ambitions deflated, trimmed their sails, forming rather docile, obedient attachments to Socrates as the only infallible source of moral guidance.

Plato and Xenophon were more ambivalent, and less docile. Though impressed by the superhuman knowledge made possible by Socrates' divine gift, they were not willing to place their own high ambitions completely under its discipline. Their treatments of the divine sign are marked by a certain ironic distance. In this respect, they provide some precedent for trivializing treatments of Socrates' prophetic gift.

But overall, Plato and Xenophon took Socrates' uncanniness much more seriously than this. They seem to concede that Socrates confronts us with a paradox, if not a full-blown mystery. We can fall in love with his example, but we do not know how to imitate him. For how can we ever aspire to the uncanniness of Socrates, this satyr who is part man, part beastly god? He is at one and the same time the most attractive and the most elusive of all philosophers. What Emerson said of Shakespeare is even more true of Socrates: he is inconceivably wise, the others conceivably; with him we are still out of doors. Our inability to domesticate Socrates continues to give philosophy the shock he gave the rich young men of Athens: our poverty will be always with us. No wonder we are still apologizing. FT

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Rabbi Weinberg's Agony

David Singer

Between the Yeshiva World and Modern Orthodoxy: The Life and Works of Rabbi Jehiel Jacob Weinberg, 1884-1966. By Marc B. Shapiro. *Littman Library of Jewish Civilization. 288 pp. $49.50.*

By the standards of academia, it was an extraordinary, even impossible, gesture.

The editor of a scholarly journal feels guilty about an article that he ran in a previous issue. Rather than letting the matter pass, he visits the grave of the person who was the subject of the article, and asks his forgiveness. And to make sure it becomes publicly known, he pens a follow-up article in which he recounts his action and again asks forgiveness for his "sin."

At Harvard or Yale, a thing like this could not happen. But at New York's Yeshiva University, which combines a four-year college program with preparation for the modern Orthodox rabbinate, it did, and just recently. Jacob J. Schacter, a rabbi and Ph.D., edits the *Torah U-Madda Journal*, a scholarly compendium that strives to integrate the perspectives of Jewish tradition—hence "*Torah*"—and the findings of modern scholarship—hence "*madda*," the Hebrew term for "science." "*Torah U-Madda*" is the official motto of Yeshiva University, and speaks to the particular brand of religious and cultural synthesis that the school advocates.

Schacter was so anguished because of the 1997 article "Scholars and Friends: Rabbi Jehiel Jacob Weinberg and Professor Samuel Atlas." The title seems innocent enough, and its content consists of nothing more than a group of letters written by a renowned twentieth-century Orthodox rabbinic scholar. How could such letters prove problematic in any way? Part of the answer is that they are highly personal in nature, and give voice to an embittered sense of life. Still another part of the answer is that the letters are filled with biting criticism of trends within Orthodoxy. And compounding all this, the letters are addressed to a non-Orthodox professor teaching at a Reform seminary.

The storm of criticism that followed upon the publication of Rabbi Weinberg's letters hardly came as a surprise to Schacter. He understood from the outset that their appearance in print would be seen in some Orthodox quarters as an act of gross disrespect toward a revered Orthodox figure of the previous generation, and as a calculated insult to the larger Orthodox community. Indeed, the vast bulk of Schacter's follow-up article (which runs to 76 pages, and includes 193 footnotes) is given over to a spirited rebuttal of just these claims on both academic and halakhic grounds. Generally speaking, Schacter remains a determined advocate of "Facing the Truths of History," as the title of his article has it.

But why then Schacter's pained sense of guilt with regard to Rabbi Weinberg? This is directly attributable to a letter he received from Weinberg's "closest, most beloved, and fiercely devoted disciple," stating categorically that the rabbi would have been horrified to know that his letters to Atlas had found their way into print. In the face of this assertion by a person whom Schacter saw as "uniquely suited to attest to the feelings and desires of his illustrious rebbe," the editor of the *Torah U-Madda Journal* felt compelled to acknowledge his "sin." "The elementary courtesy of maintaining Rabbi Weinberg's personal privacy," Schacter concluded, "dictates that if he would have been opposed to their publication, [his letters] should not have been published." Hence the visit to the grave.

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Schacter's actions speak well of him. But Weinberg's letters still need some explanation. Weinberg was a talmudic scholar of the first order, and his published volumes quickly assumed canonical status in the eyes of the Orthodox rabbinic elite. His halakhic rulings were closely attended to by all sectors of Orthodox Jewry, and as such played an important role in the evolution of Jewish law in the twentieth century. Weinberg's death in 1966 was mourned by Orthodox Jews around the world as the loss of an exemplary religious personality. How is it then that this rabbinic giant penned a series of letters that give voice, as Schacter describes it, to a "lonely, frustrated, bitter, and tragic life?" How is it that this pillar of the Orthodox establishment wrote letter after letter in which, to quote Schacter again, he lashed out against the "hypocrisy, extremism, and unethical behavior he found within Orthodoxy"? Clearly there is a puzzle here, one that badly needs solving.

Rabbi Weinberg's letters in the *Torah U-Madda Journal* were assembled by Marc B. Shapiro, who holds a chair in Judaica at the University of Scranton. Shapiro has now come forward with a full-scale study of the life and writings of Jehiel Weinberg—*Between the Yeshiva World and Modern Orthodoxy*—that goes a long way toward clearing up the mystery surrounding the man. Shapiro's signal contribution is to present Weinberg in the round: both the public and the private figure. With regard to the public dimension, Shapiro's central focus, as indicated by the title of his book, is on Weinberg's sustained attempt to bridge the gap between the traditionalist Orthodoxy of Eastern Europe and the more Westernized version that had taken root in Germany. In this context, Shapiro devotes considerable space to Weinberg's role as chief talmudist at the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary, and to the legal rulings he issued on such "modern" topics as the bat-mitzvah ceremony and coeducational youth activities. With reference to the private side, Shapiro makes good use of Weinberg's substantial and remarkably candid unpublished correspondence to tell the story of a man frustrated by life's difficulties and left completely shattered by the Holocaust. The mere narrating of it, which Shapiro does with great sensitivity, makes the reader wince.

Shapiro's aim of providing a "complete study of Weinberg's life and achievements" takes him, of necessity, in many different directions. To begin with, there is the need to situate Weinberg in the two sharply divergent religious-cultural contexts in which he was immersed in the early decades of the twentieth century: the world of East European Jewish piety and the assimilationist milieu of German Jewry. As a prolific author, Weinberg produced not only volumes of responsa (legal rulings written in the form of letters), but also polemical essays and—unusually for a traditional talmudist—works of modern academic scholarship. Still further, Rabbi Weinberg played an active role as a communal leader, participating in debates involving such wrenching issues as the rise of Nazism and the struggle to create a Jewish state. Shapiro acquits himself well in dealing with all of these matters by drawing on his broad knowledge of Jewish history, and by deploying the specialized skills needed to unravel rabbinic texts. He does not shy away from taking a firm stand on particular points of interpretation, even when the sources remain somewhat murky. Finally, Shapiro's open championing of the modern Orthodox in their struggle with traditionalist Orthodox elements makes for a presentation that, if obviously biased, has strong narrative zest.

Shapiro's book is developed along chronological lines, taking in the four major periods of Weinberg's life: his years in Eastern Europe (1884-1913), in which he trained as a talmudist at a number of great yeshivas, and then served in the rabbinate; his first two decades in Germany (1914-1932), during which he obtained an advanced secular education and assumed a leading place at the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary; the Nazi period (1933-1945), in which he was thrust into an important communal role in Germany, spent time in the Warsaw ghetto, and was ultimately transferred to a Nazi detention camp in Bavaria; and the postwar years in Montreux, Switzerland (1946-1966), where he lived quietly, seeking to restore the broken strands of his life. Shapiro works a discussion of Weinberg's writings into this chronological structure, making clear the context in which individual responsa and essays were penned. This is most welcome, as all too often the analysis of rabbinic writings takes place in a historical vacuum. Shapiro, however, could well have gone further in teasing out the elements of commonality that cut across Weinberg's major responsa.

Shapiro properly observes that Weinberg, time and again in his life, "found himself pulled in opposite directions." This certainly applies to his youth in Eastern Europe, in the course of which Weinberg dreamed of obtaining a secular education even as he was immersed in advanced Talmud study. Even in the small town of Ciechanowiec, Poland, where Weinberg was born in 1884, traditional patterns of life had begun to break down by the turn of the century. In his adolescent years, Weinberg was exposed to a Jewish society that was "fragmented," and in which "the abandonment of religious tradition was widespread." Most painfully for him, the guardians of Torah, as represented by the yeshiva heads, took an either/or approach in this context: they viewed the slightest accommodation to secular trends as anathema. Thus, Shapiro relates the remarkable fact that when Weinberg, who had already

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obtained ordination, went to Grodno in 1904 "in order to study Russian," Rabbi Nathan Zvi Finkel, the head of the Slobodka yeshiva, and one of the greatest scholars of his generation, followed him there in order to dissuade him from this action. (Finkel soon had his way.)

Even within the confines of the yeshiva, where Weinberg enjoyed phenomenal success as a student, he found himself pulled in different directions. His years of study coincided with the raging debate in rabbinic circles about the proper place of *mussar* (pietistic literature) in the yeshiva curriculum. One side, led by Finkel, argued that the study of *mussar* would enrich Talmud study and make for more fully developed religious personalities; the other side maintained that *mussar* was a wasteful distraction that would undermine the ideal of Torah study for its own sake. While attending Slobodka, Weinberg grew very close to Finkel and other leading personalities of the *mussar* movement. Still, when it came time to secure a certificate of ordination, Weinberg made sure to have it drawn up by two leading anti-*mussar* rabbis.

The process by which Weinberg entered the rabbinate in 1906 was impossibly wrenching. In order to secure the post of town rabbi in Pilwishki, Lithuania, he was forced to take as a bride the sixteen-year-old daughter of the former rabbi—it was a package deal. For Weinberg, Shapiro indicates, this forced marriage was the "most tragic event of his life." Shapiro explains:

> [Weinberg] simply did not care for his bride, who was very young and uneducated, probably knowing little more than how to read the prayerbook. She was a typical Orthodox woman of the old generation, whereas Weinberg, despite his yeshiva training . . . read modern newspapers and books. . . . The relationship between Weinberg and Ester Levin appeared doomed from the start.

Weinberg separated from his wife when he went to Germany in 1914, and divorced her eight years later. He never remarried.

Weinberg's arrival in Germany just before the outbreak of World War I was the crucial turning point of his life. He had already gained a smattering of secular education by reading on his own, but now Weinberg was able to enroll at the University of Giessen, where he ended up with a doctorate in biblical studies, and served as a lecturer in Judaica. (Shapiro reproduces a wonderful picture of Weinberg, sans skullcap, sitting with his academic colleagues.) In the East European context, Weinberg's push into the secular realm would have meant a break with Orthodoxy, but in the German Orthodox environment it could prove religiously enriching. Orthodox Judaism in Germany—called "neo-Orthodoxy"—took its lead from the philosophy of Samson Raphael Hirsch, a nineteenth-century Frankfurt rabbi who advocated the mix of ritual observance and cultural openness. Hirsch was unapologetic in endorsing secular education, even as he denounced the heresies of Reform Judaism. For Weinberg, Hirsch's "Torah and secular culture" outlook was just right, permitting him to harmonize his talmudic interests and his broader cultural aspirations. "It was only in Germany," Shapiro rightly observes, "that Weinberg's full talents began to flower."

If Weinberg found in Germany a culture-friendly Orthodox milieu, the German Orthodox found in him an authentic representative of the East European talmudic elite. Neo-Orthodoxy in Germany was very successful in nurturing a committed and knowledgeable laity, but, with a few notable exceptions, it fell short of the mark in producing Talmud scholars of the first rank. Weinberg, therefore, newly fitted with academic credentials, stood out as a figure of note, since he commanded both traditional talmudic learning and modern critical scholarship. In 1924, Rabbi Weinberg was named lecturer in Talmud and codes at the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary, a position that made him, in Shapiro's words, "the supreme halakhic authority for the numerous communal rabbis who were seminary graduates." As his fame grew, Weinberg became an ever more important player on the German Orthodox scene.

Weinberg's leadership role at the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary was cruelly tested during the Nazi era. Shapiro offers the shocking revelation that Weinberg acted as an apologist for Hitler in the period immediately following his appointment as chancellor. In March 1933, Weinberg gave an interview to a newspaper in which, as Shapiro summarizes it, "[Weinberg] played down the anti-Semitic nature of the new regime, denied that Jewish political rights or livelihoods were at risk, and expressed optimism for the Jewish future in Germany, a country based on the rule of law." Shapiro adds tellingly that "Weinberg's comments differed from those of other Jewish figures in Germany in that he was not subjected to governmental pressure to portray the regime in a positive light. On the contrary, his opinion was expressed voluntarily." Shapiro is completely baffled by this, and can only attribute Weinberg's behavior to extraordinary political naiveté. In any case, as the Nazi assault on German Jewry grew in intensity, Weinberg sobered up and acted responsibly in dealing with a host of matters—from trying to preserve some form of kosher slaughter in the country to finding places of refuge for the scholars and students affiliated with the Seminary. Weinberg himself remained in Germany throughout the decade, turning down an offer to become head of the rabbinical court in London.

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Following *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary was permanently closed, and Weinberg was ordered to leave Germany. He made his way to Kovno and then to Warsaw, where he was trapped by the start of World War II. Weinberg was asked to serve as chief rabbi of the city, but he refused, fearing that he would become a tool of the Gestapo. In the Warsaw ghetto, Weinberg was daily witness to a landscape of horror, which he later described:

> There the German beast showed itself with all its ferocity, violence, and cruelty never seen or heard since the heavens and earth have been created. . . . May I not live to see the consolation of Zion if I have not seen men, women, and children thrown to the ground and trampled by people fleeing for fear of death, or persons collapsed from hunger and cold and murderous blows. They lay on the ground helplessly and breathed their last with no one to bring them to burial.

Weinberg's own survival is directly attributable to his being sent, in October 1941, to a Nazi detention camp in Bavaria, where he remained until the end of the war.

Weinberg emerged alive from the Holocaust, but the religious worlds of Eastern Europe and Germany that had nurtured his Orthodoxy in very different ways were utterly destroyed. While Weinberg gloried in the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, illness, fear of change, and a concern about being drawn into Orthodox factional struggles led him to put aside the thought of settling there. Instead, Weinberg moved to Montreux, Switzerland, where he lived quietly with the family of one of his former students, in a Jewish community numbering some one hundred. Weinberg remained very active on the literary front, producing numerous responsa and an occasional academic monograph. However, this scholarly output could do nothing to heal the deep wound in his heart, a wound that turned his personal letters to Samuel Atlas into an orgy of complaint about life—about the "fraudulence, hypocrisy, and flattery that fills our world," about the "despicable charlatanism" that afflicts Orthodox life, and about his own "frozen heart." The letters reproduced in *Torah U-Madda Journal* give voice to the private agony of a man broken in spirit.

Shapiro shrewdly points to a major irony of Rabbi Weinberg's career: even as the Holocaust shattered Weinberg's personal religious world, it created the conditions for his emergence as an Orthodox figure of international renown. Weinberg was one of the few top-caliber talmudists to survive World War II, and as such, was increasingly sought after to rule on matters of Jewish law. This consultative process took on a strong international dimension as Weinberg's students, who had fled from Germany to the United States, England, and Palestine, made his name known to ever-widening circles of Orthodox Jews. Finally, as the rare halakhic scholar who was seen as open to the secular realm, Weinberg became the legal decisor (*posek*) of choice for the modern Orthodox leaders who set the agenda for Orthodoxy in the immediate postwar decades.

But was Rabbi Weinberg, in his own right, a modern Orthodox Jew? This is the key interpretative question that needs to be addressed in any critical assessment of Weinberg's career.* Given his reputation as a talmudist, traditionalist Orthodox Jews—those opposed to cultural openness—have been understandably reluctant to cede him as a prize to their modern Orthodox opponents. Engaging in damage control, they have argued that Weinberg's secular education was a mere surface element, and that it had no impact at all on his basic religious outlook. Shapiro is easily able to refute this view by citing chapter and verse from Weinberg's responsa, essays, and letters.

Still, it must be said that at times Shapiro seems overzealous in claiming Weinberg for the modern Orthodox camp. In his eagerness to hold up Weinberg as a legitimating role model for Orthodox modernists, Shapiro tends to set aside any evidence that suggests a more complicated picture, relegating some relevant complicating facts to the footnotes.

The strongest evidence for Weinberg's modern Orthodox stance is his growing identification over time with the "Torah and secular culture" philosophy of Samson Raphael Hirsch. Shapiro does a fine job of tracing Weinberg's evolving position on this matter, from firm opposition during his years in Eastern Europe, to qualified support during his early German period, to wholesale endorsement during his years at the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary and thereafter. We noted above Weinberg's strong desire as a youth to gain exposure to secular education. Thus, it comes as a surprise to learn that Weinberg, while serving in the rabbinate in Pilwishki, penned an essay defending the traditional yeshiva approach of zero tolerance for secular studies. Most likely, this is to be explained by the same conformist pressure that led him to marry against his wishes. Whatever the explanation, Rabbi Weinberg's essay is unequivocal in rejecting any accommodation with secular trends:

> Those whose major purpose is a career go forth from the yeshiva and wander in other fields. Those who stray into foreign territory will not

*The discussion that follows has benefited from a reading of Judith Bleich, "Between East and West: Modernity and Tradition in the Writings of Rabbi Jehiel Yaakov Weinberg," in Moshe Sokol, editor, *Engaging Modernity* (1997).

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> return because of a little European education which is given to them in a superficial manner on the stools of the yeshiva. Not from these shall Judaism be built and not in them shall Jews put their national trust. At the sound of the first shot these weaklings will abandon the battle. The fulfillment of the Torah requires great sacrifices from us. . . . Our entire life must be a sacrifice.

No sooner had Rabbi Weinberg arrived in Germany, Shapiro is quick to note, then he began to back away from his stated opposition to secular education. In part, this was a corrective move necessitated by his enrollment at the University of Giessen. Also contributing to this shift, however, was Weinberg's living encounter with Hirschian Orthodoxy, which made clear to him just how successful Hirsch's disciples had been in producing a Jewishly committed laity. At a time when hordes of young people in Eastern Europe were abandoning Orthodox Judaism for secular ideologies of every stripe, German Orthodoxy managed to retain the loyalty of its youth despite their exposure to secular education. Clearly then, a "Torah and secular culture" approach could prove effective, even if Weinberg at this juncture was still not prepared to endorse it openly as a cure for the ills besetting Orthodoxy in Eastern Europe.

It was during his years at the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary that Weinberg emerged as a full-fledged Hirschian. In this culminating phase, Weinberg lavished praise on German Orthodoxy for producing, as he termed it in a 1927 speech to Jewish academics, a "complete synthesis of Torah and life." While Orthodox leaders in Eastern Europe struggled in vain to keep modernity at arm's length, Weinberg argued, Hirsch's followers in Germany pursued a positive course, forging strong bonds between traditional Judaism and secular culture. The key to the success of this enterprise was the development of a cadre of rabbis fully in touch with the modern spirit:

> As bearers of the word of God, it is the obligation of rabbis to explain to the nation and to the world the view of Judaism with regard to all problems of ethics, law, and social reform with which the new generation struggles. It is their obligation to demonstrate that Judaism is not merely a compendium of religious laws and customs, but is a decisive spiritual force in the life of humanity. . . . It is not possible for a rabbi in our day to evade [problems] and shrink in a corner of his study. . . . He must know what is transpiring around him in the world of science and literature. . . . Without systematic training and without knowledge of the language of modern intellectual thought he will not be able to find the path and the spiritual connection to the inner world of youth and the members of the new generation.

At this point a caveat needs to be entered. While it is certainly the case that Weinberg, in his mature phase, happily operated in a "Torah and secular culture" framework, he in no way surrendered his belief that Talmud study, as carried out in the great yeshivas of Eastern Europe, represented the touchstone of authentic Judaism. Shapiro acknowledges this, but fails to make enough of its implications. Weinberg never for a moment suggested that advanced institutions like Slobodka and Mir alter their educational programs to make room for secular studies—their mission was the maintenance of Torah study in its pure form. Moreover, even in a "Torah and secular culture" context, Weinberg took it for granted that Talmud study had strong precedence over secular pursuits. While Weinberg regarded the latter as worthy in their own right, there was no question in his mind that the study of Judaism's sacred texts had full axiological priority. All this comes to the fore in a letter that Weinberg sent to a newly-ordained student at the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary:

> I have one request of you, that afterwards you should travel to the yeshiva of Mir or the yeshiva of Slobodka. There you will devote all your time, day and night, to sacred subjects and only sacred subjects. . . . It is my desire to bring you to the wellspring from which I myself drank. Now that you have satiated yourself with European culture more than enough, it is your obligation to return to the pure and holy wellspring of the yeshivot. There you will attain the gates of wisdom and enhanced knowledge of our holy Torah.

Clearly, Weinberg's endorsement of Hirschian philosophy was not without qualification.

There is a similar element of equivocation in Weinberg's role as a rabbinic decisor. While many of his rulings strongly point to a modern Orthodox sensibility, there is evidence as well of a more conservative dynamic. While all four volumes of his collected halakhic rulings, *Seridei Esh* (*Remnants from the Fire*), appeared in the 1960s, they include a significant number of responsa dating from before World War II. In immediate terms, the title alludes to the fact that the bulk of Weinberg's early responsa were destroyed in the Holocaust. More broadly, however, the title speaks to his image of himself

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as a lonely survivor from a lost world. That someone operating with this self-image could go on to produce a series of forward-looking responsa in the postwar period is nothing short of astonishing.

Weinberg's most innovative responsa deal with issues related to women, and this in itself is a telling indication of a modern Orthodox sensibility. Women's issues pose a special challenge for Orthodox leadership because of the vast gulf separating traditional norms and modern expectations. Weinberg's key concern in this area was to upgrade the religious participation of women so that they would feel less like second-class citizens within the halakhic system. (This formulation of the matter may appear as excessively wedded to current feminist perspectives, but it is exactly how Rabbi Weinberg saw the issue.) He endorsed the bat-mitzvah ceremony, as well as coeducational youth groups and youth choirs, and strongly advocated substantial religious education for girls.

In still another bow to modernity, Weinberg often would foreground sociological factors that he saw to be central to a given halakhic issue. Take, for example, how Weinberg approaches the matter of bat-mitzvah:

> It is disappointing that in general education . . . we concern ourselves with girls as much as with boys, but we totally neglect religious education, i.e., Bible study, the *mussar* literature of our sages, and instruction concerning the commandments in which women are obligated. . . . From the standpoint of logic and pedagogy it is almost imperative to celebrate the attainment of the age of religious obligation for girls too. Moreover, the discrimination which occurs between boys and girls with regard to the celebration of maturity makes a very hurtful impression on the feelings of the maturing girl, who in other areas has been granted equality.

Or take his ruling on mixed youth choirs:

> In countries like Germany and France, women would feel disgraced and deprived of their rights if we would forbid them to participate in rejoicing over the Sabbath by singing holy songs. This is evident to anyone familiar with the character of women in these countries. A stringent ruling could cause women to become disaffected from religion, heaven forbid.

Implied in Weinberg's sociological glosses is a call to halakhic action. Shapiro is thus fully justified in maintaining that on an assortment of cutting-edge issues Weinberg "did not consider pros and cons objectively. Rather, he approached the discussion with a set goal and went about finding the halakhic sources to justify it." Crucial to this process was Rabbi Weinberg's heavy reliance on minority opinions within the corpus of Jewish law. Shapiro pointedly observes in this context: "Halakhic interpretation was not in dispute, but rather how the needs of contemporary Orthodoxy were to be evaluated and what the role of *posek* should be in responding to those needs." Given his worried reading of the "sociological realities," Shapiro concludes, Weinberg was prepared to "explore the outer limits of halakhic propriety."

Still—and Shapiro is fully alert to this—there is quite another side to Rabbi Weinberg's labors as a rabbinic decisor. Not infrequently, Weinberg shied away from issuing liberal rulings when he was unable to gain the support of other rabbinic scholars for his proposed course of action. This cautious approach reflects a conservative dynamic inherent in the halakhic process, but the relevant point is that Rabbi Weinberg was hardly exempt from it. As Shapiro explains:

> Weinberg took his place with many other *posekim* who are characterized by a lack of confidence in their own authority and hesitancy in reaching significant decisions. . . . It is only the rare halakhist who can declare that a *posek* must fearlessly answer all queries, and once convinced of the correctness of his argument is obliged to rule in accordance with it. Weinberg's position was much more in line with traditional patterns of halakhic decisionmaking, which explains why he was reluctant to issue independent rulings in a number of areas, in particular concerning family law, even though he felt strongly that halakhic leniencies were possible and desirable.

The conservative component in Weinberg's stance as a rabbinic decisor is strikingly evident in his refusal, as late as 1960, to issue an unambiguous ruling permitting women's suffrage. Here was an instance of rank discrimination against women. Here also was a situation in which Weinberg saw no direct halakhic impediment to a permissive ruling. Still, when he took up the issue in a published responsum, he waffled, taking note of those decisors who opposed suffrage for women on grounds of "female modesty." Under the circumstances, Weinberg was only willing to suggest, as Shapiro puts it, that the "matter be left alone as it would eventually be worked out by itself."

The one area of Rabbi Weinberg's involvement that places him unreservedly in the modern Orthodox camp is in his embrace of academic Jewish studies. From the traditionalist Orthodox standpoint, this is a forbidden domain, since it entails exposure to all kinds of "hereti-

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cal" ideas. Weinberg, however, would have none of this. Not only did he write a doctoral dissertation on the Syriac translation of the Bible, he formed a close personal and professional relationship with the Christian scholar Paul Kahle. He drew a sharp distinction between religious belief and scholarly conclusions, arguing, as Shapiro puts it, that "there was no place for religious polemics in the realm of scholarship." It was this open intellectual approach that permitted him to write with respect about such academic scholars of the Talmud as Louis Ginzberg, Saul Lieberman, and Samuel Atlas.

Shapiro works overtime to establish Rabbi Weinberg's bona fides as a modern Orthodox role model, and seems to expect that his biography will contribute to the Weinberg "legacy." But he fails to follow this up by asking a crucial question: Are Orthodox Jews today interested in what Weinberg has to offer? Is there a significant audience at present for an Orthodoxy built around "Torah and secular culture"? Framing these questions is important because modern Orthodoxy's stock is currently at an all-time low. Indeed, the movement is in deep crisis—its leaders demoralized, its institutions weakened, its mass base shrinking rapidly. This holds true both in Israel and the United States, the two great centers of contemporary Jewish life.

Shapiro's failure to reckon with modern Orthodoxy's current agony robs him of the ability to shape a meaningful conclusion for his book. *Between the Yeshiva World and Modern Orthodoxy*, in embarrassing fashion, simply grinds to a halt following a discussion of Weinberg's responsa. In failing to relate Weinberg's intellectual enterprise to the situation of Orthodoxy today, Shapiro leaves his hero beached in the historical past. That is hardly the place where a presumed role model should find himself.

What accounts for modern Orthodoxy's fall from grace? The two operative factors here are strong competition from the traditionalist sector of the Orthodox community and modern Orthodoxy's own feelings of inadequacy. Traditionalism has proved more than a match for modernism in winning the allegiance of Orthodox Jews. This development is surprising when one realizes that traditionalist Orthodoxy was nearly wiped out in the Holocaust. Yet through sheer will the traditionalists established a network of intensive Jewish schools and have since staged an extraordinary comeback. What traditionalism offers the Orthodox is "Torah-true" Judaism without a secular additive. From the traditionalist standpoint, "Torah and secular culture" is not an expansive religious ideal, but a formula for religious compromise. The basic logic is clear: since everything valuable already exists within Torah, cultural exposure is either an unnecessary duplication or a dangerous snare.

Traditionalist Orthodoxy's strongest asset is the confidence born of believing that it is the one true Jewish way. In contrast, modern Orthodoxy is often shadowed by self-doubt, since it only claims parity with Orthodox traditionalism. Adding to the anxiety of the modern Orthodox is the fact that few outstanding rabbinic authorities are willing to endorse a "Torah and secular culture" approach, while many are eager to denounce it. In a worst-case scenario, the modern Orthodox end up internalizing the critique of their opponents, thus coming to see themselves as hopelessly compromised. All this is very much in evidence on the Orthodox scene today, making for a situation in which modern Orthodox spokesmen are simply unable to stand up to the challenge presented by Orthodox traditionalism.

The situation of modern Orthodoxy at present is at the furthest possible remove from the one that I encountered as an undergraduate at Yeshiva University in the early 1960s. In those years, as I have had occasion to recall, the dream of a modern Orthodox utopia danced before our eyes:

> It seemed clear to everyone I knew . . . that modern Orthodoxy was here to stay; that, indeed, it was only a matter of time before all the Orthodox joined the modernist camp. Who could resist something as appealing as modern Orthodoxy? Who in his right mind would spurn a form of Orthodoxy which held out the promise of a successful integration of Judaism and Western culture, tradition and modernity, Jewish and American living? Who could be so hopelessly narrow-minded as to choose to live in one world—the world of Jewish tradition—when modern Orthodoxy offered the best of two worlds—the truths of Torah combined with the insights of secular knowledge? It was an inspiring vision, and one that my friends and I fully expected to become a universal reality in Orthodox life.

The great exemplar of modern Orthodoxy at Yeshiva University was Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (1903-1993), who combined phenomenal talmudic learning with deep philosophical knowledge. My own guide in this domain, however, was Rabbi Irving "Yitz" Greenberg (currently chairman of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum), who had just arrived at Yeshiva as a Harvard-trained historian. Central to Greenberg's message was the call for a culturally engaged Orthodoxy:

> Orthodoxy must change its identity from a fundamentalism to a religion, from preserving Judaism to affirming it and its sovereignty in

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> modern culture. . . . There is a need for the renewal of the process of imbuing the contemporary experience with religious import by applying religious values and practices to all areas of secular life. But this can only be done when Orthodoxy works through, in depth, the modern experience so that it speaks to this generation and in it. . . . It must be crystal clear that [Orthodoxy's] affirmations do not proceed from being a cultural backwater, or because [it] does not yet recognize the problems that have been raised.

Greenberg's sense of what Orthodoxy might become—and it was a view shared by such others as Emanuel Rackman, Eliezer Berkovits, Michael Wyschogrod, and David Hartman—elicited an enthusiastic response among a broad segment of the Orthodox public during the glory years of modern Orthodoxy in the 1960s and 1970s. After that, however, the ground began to shift rapidly, as traditionalist Orthodox elements started making their presence felt. By the 1990s, the fortunes of modern Orthodoxy were in sharp decline, with the word "modern" actually becoming taboo. ("Centrist" was now the term of choice.) Today modern Orthodoxy is, so to speak, on the respirator. It is no accident that an organization currently working to revive the modern Orthodox enterprise has as its motto "the courage to be modern and Orthodox." Courage indeed!

In a very real sense, the private agony that Rabbi Weinberg experienced in the last years of his life has become the public agony of today's modern Orthodoxy. But it is precisely a modern Orthodoxy in crisis that has need of Weinberg as a positive role model. Crucial in this context is not this or that particular of Weinberg's intellectual stance, but the overall trajectory of his career. To a modern Orthodoxy suffering a collapse of faith in its own legitimacy, Weinberg offers the edifying example of a traditionalist Orthodox Jew who freely chose to embrace modern Orthodoxy. Having begun his career as an apologist for the culture-negating Orthodoxy of Eastern Europe, Rabbi Weinberg became a champion of the culture-embracing Orthodoxy of Germany. With his University of Giessen doctorate in hand, Weinberg defended Hirsch's "Torah and secular culture" philosophy against any and all in the Orthodox world who sought to delegitimate it. Weinberg's standing as a world-class talmudist—something fully acknowledged in the ranks of Orthodox traditionalism—guaranteed him a respectful hearing as an advocate of modern Orthodoxy.

In his prime, Weinberg held forth the vision of a modern Orthodoxy that would achieve "a complete synthesis of Torah and life." Is it still possible to hope that such an Orthodoxy may yet emerge? FT

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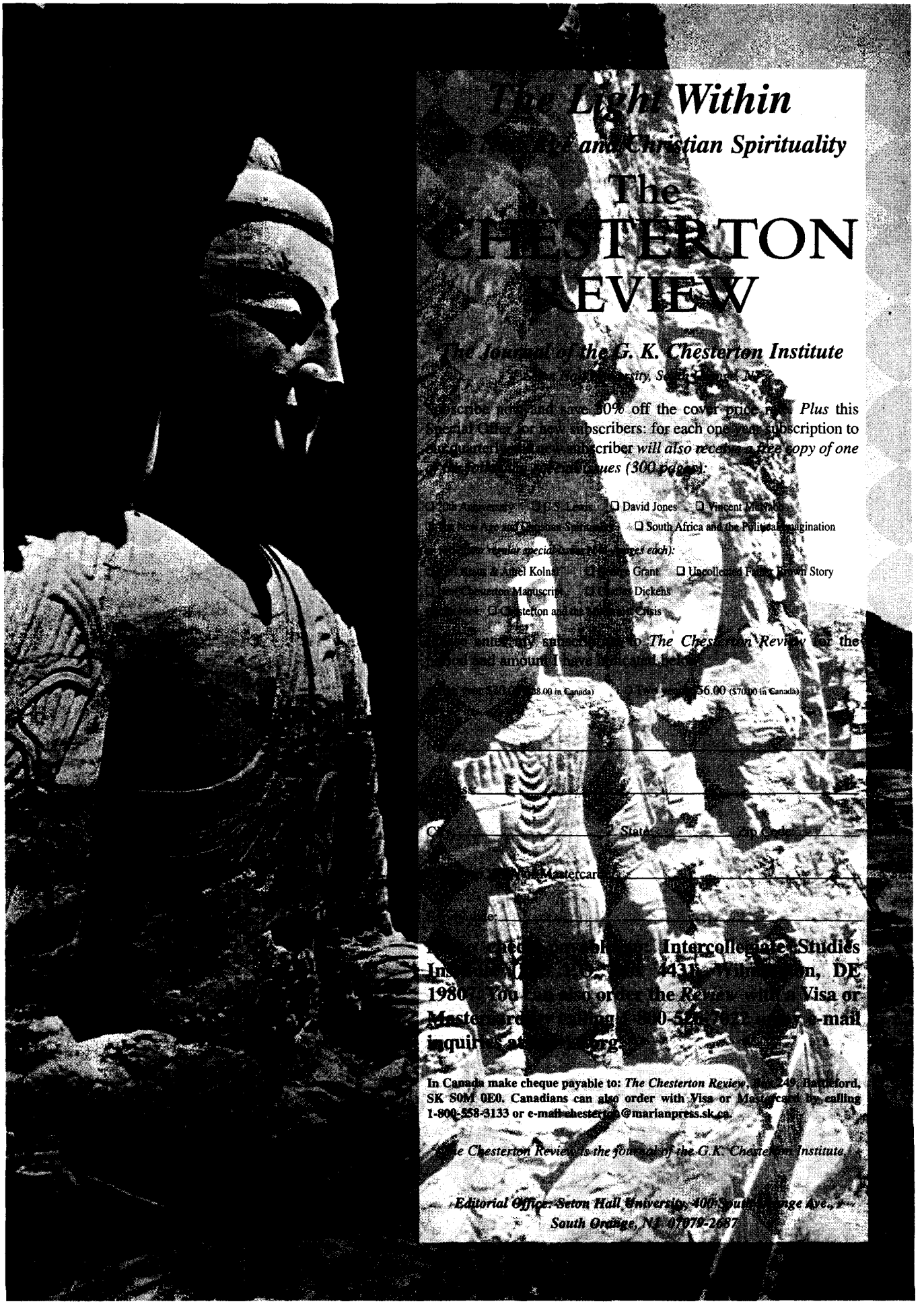

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Books In Review

Human Rights and Mrs. Roosevelt

A WORLD MADE NEW: ELEANOR ROOSEVELT AND THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. By MARY ANN GLENDON. *Random House. 333 pp. $25.95.*

***Reviewed by* Elliott Abrams**

MARY ANN GLENDON'S latest project is in its way far more ambitious than her previous books about human rights or family law, and far more difficult than her work educating tomorrow's solons at Harvard Law School. For in *A World Made New*, she has set out to reclaim both Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from the dubious, indeed hostile, regard of conservatives.

At least since the days of Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Jeane Kirkpatrick, of "Dictatorships and Double Standards" and the infamous resolution on Zionism and racism, the UN has been a target of conservative and neoconservative ire. Its declarations regarding human rights have an especially bitter taste for many Americans, including conservatives, coming as they so often do—even now—over the signatures of the delegates from Turkmenistan, Zimbabwe, and the People's Republic of China. The Universal Declaration (UDHR) lends itself to cynicism and accusations of "globaloney," given that its broad language was originally approved by Josef Stalin and has been employed as a weapon by dictators as well as a shield by citizens. As for Mrs. Roosevelt, she has been a conservative target for generations, the last word in syrupy liberalism, a figure of fun from another era.

To Professor Glendon, these attitudes are foolish and unfair. She has written a careful history of the Declaration and of Mrs. Roosevelt's role in it, and finds a very great deal to admire. Using many materials never before available—memoirs or diaries of key participants such as the Lebanese delegate and later President of Lebanon, Charles Malik, and the newly opened Soviet archives—she has carefully patched together the public debates, off-the-record meetings, and private thoughts that led to the approval of the UDHR as we now know it. And she has faced up to the questions that critics most often ask: Does the Declaration matter? How "universal" are the values it expresses? Has it not lent itself to abuse, especially by dictators who cynically exploit the text's grant of equal status for economic and social rights with political and civil rights?

Given the subject matter, it would have been impossible to make this story a ripping page-turner, and Glendon's book does not compete with the most recent product of John Grisham or Elmore Leonard. Nevertheless, the story is an interesting one. For one thing, at its core is Mrs. Roosevelt, long an almost superhuman figure to liberals—right up there with Adlai Stevenson—and a target of conservative derision. The portrait we get here paints Mrs. Roosevelt as a woman quite conservative in demeanor and fundamental beliefs, and quite admirable in character. A deeply religious person who ended each day on her knees in prayer, she emerges primarily as one friend describes her: a person who "measured accomplishment in life more in terms of service than in terms of happiness." "There was," Glendon tells us, "something profoundly moving about the tall, plain woman with stern principles, a wise heart, and a radiant smile."

In this account, her role as chairman of the Commission on Human Rights, a position to which she was appointed by Harry Truman in 1945, was central to its success. So Mrs. Roosevelt thought: "She herself had always considered her membership on the American UN delegation as the most important position of her life and her role in framing the Universal Declaration her most important contribution toward a better world." Glendon agrees: "As chairman of the Human Rights Commission, Eleanor Roosevelt provided the leadership that kept the project moving, the political influence that held the State Department on board, and the personal attentions that made each member of the Commission feel respected." Glendon describes some of the tactical and political judgments Mrs. Roosevelt made (for example, pushing for a nonbinding Declaration rather than more ambitious, enforceable covenants that would have required Senate passage), and here too Mrs. Roosevelt emerges a sensible and indeed savvy tactician.

BUT RECLAIMING Mrs. Roosevelt from conservative obloquy is only the smaller part of Prof. Glendon's project here. The larger problem is the Declaration itself. Mrs. Roosevelt may indeed have been central to its adoption, but is this a claim of which anyone should be proud? There have been two main criticisms of the Declaration, one from the left or Third World, and the other from the right, especially the American right. The criticism from the Third World has most often described the UDHR as a Western product, a form of intellectual and political colonialism imposed just after the Second World War by Western delegates at a UN composed of the United States, the USSR, and a few declining colonial powers. Glendon disposes of this fantasy. She describes the key roles played by

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Charles Malik, a Lebanese Christian statesman and intellectual, P. C. Chang, the Chinese delegate, a man of broad culture familiar with Western and Chinese rights traditions, and several other key non-Western delegates. She notes as well that most provisions were adopted unanimously, with votes from Asian and Islamic countries as well as the Latin Americans, heirs to the continental rights tradition rather than our own. She reminds us that roughly 150 countries have voluntarily bound themselves not only to the Declaration, but to the far more precise Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic and Social Rights.

More attention is correctly dedicated in Glendon's book to the conservative critique: that the Declaration equates economic and social with civil and political rights, and has thereby given generations of dictators a weapon. Equating the right to housing or to employment with the right to free speech or freedom of religion, goes the argument, allowed the Soviets and now allows the Chinese to say, "Well, you have your favorites and we have ours." Worse yet, by using rights language for such social goals as good housing and good medical care, goals that are simply incapable of achievement in many places right now, the Declaration undercuts our ability to insist that rights are things that must be granted immediately and everywhere, independently of a nation's wealth or stage of development.

To these arguments Prof. Glendon offers several answers. She does not entirely disagree, and acknowledges that "with hindsight, it is perhaps regrettable that the framers, in dealing with these provisions, did not adopt the obligation model. To couch the social security and welfare principles in terms of a common responsibility might have resonated better than rights in most of the world's cultures." But her defense only begins with this slight—in my view, much too slight—bow in the direction of critics.

FIRST, SHE EXPLAINS the Declaration's main achievement: removing the individual from the total control of the state. As one of its authors, the French jurist René Cassin, said in accepting the Nobel Peace Prize in 1968, "the individual becomes a subject of international law in respect of his life and liberty." If the jurisdiction of the state remained primary, it was no longer exclusive. Even critics must admit the weight of this contribution, which emerged from the ashes of Auschwitz and the testimony at Nuremberg and indeed inspired the efforts to create the Declaration. Everything positive in the modern international human rights movement begins with this proposition, and in this sense Prof. Glendon calls the Declaration the "parent document" of the movement.

Second, she argues that the Declaration has been invaluable as a set of goals. A specific example: "The last sentence of Article 25—on children born outside marriage—was . . . one of the earliest acknowledgments of a principle that would eventually transform national legislation nearly everywhere" regarding the rights of illegitimate children. More broadly, Mrs. Roosevelt saw and Prof. Glendon sees the UDHR as an educational effort and a "moral beacon" rather than a "vague proclamation." Glendon admires the "large-souled men and women who strove to bring a standard of right from the ashes of terrible wrongs."

Third and most powerfully, Glendon argues that the Declaration's insistence on economic and social as well as political rights is in fact correct. It is here that Glendon adds to her identity as the Learned Hand Professor at Harvard Law School an additional side, namely her deep Catholic faith and her support for the social teachings of the Church and especially of the current Pope. For Glendon shares the view that there is more to man than the portrait of self-sufficient, independent, indeed isolated individuals drawn by some Anglo-American political philosophers. She is impatient not only with those who play down the Declaration's insistence on political rights, but also with Westerners who would as soon forget its social side. "When read as it was meant to be, namely as a whole, it is an integrat-

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ed document that rests on a concept of the dignity of the human person within the human family," she insists.

Then she expands the argument: "Forgetfulness, neglect, and opportunism have obscured the Declaration's message that rights have conditions—that everyone's rights are importantly dependent on respect for the rights of others, on the rule of law, and on a healthy civil society." Moreover, and here we see how Glendon is influenced by John Paul II, she reminds us that the Declaration "reflected a certain philosophy—the conviction that culture is prior to law," because "the principal framers, though they differed on many points, were as one in their belief in the priority of culture." The mere recitation of political and civil rights without reference to how they exist in their cultural setting would, to Glendon, be no improvement on the Declaration.

This is the best defense the Declaration has ever had or is likely to get. I would emphasize somewhat more than Prof. Glendon does the price paid for that error of using the single term "rights" to cover all the goals of the Declaration. And I cannot fully share her sense of its achievements. To take a prime example, she discusses in some detail the debate on religious freedom in the Human Rights Commission when the Declaration was being drafted. Was there a right to change one's religion? Could Islam tolerate this supposition? Not according to the Saudis, who abstained on the final vote for adoption due to their disagreement here. But Glendon recounts the intervention of the delegate of Pakistan, then the UN's most populous Islamic member nation, Foreign Minister Muhammad Zafrulla Khan. He explained that the Koran says there should be no compulsion regarding faith, so freedom to change beliefs was consistent with Islam. Pakistan would happily vote yes on the UDHR provision on the right to change one's religion.

But the full story is far sadder. Zafrulla Khan was an Ahmadi, a Muslim sect now so oppressed in Pakistan that by law its members are not regarded as Muslims at all, and are actually jailed for calling themselves Muslims. To get passports, they must deny their faith. Ahmadis have trouble surviving, and it is impossible that one would now be foreign minister. This story is emblematic: in the Islamic world, the principles of the UDHR probably had wider acceptance in 1948, when the document was adopted by the United Nations, than they do today. The world's most populous nation, China, accepts the Declaration in principle—but the Chinese signer in 1948 represented a country striving for freedom, not the Communist dictatorship that has for fifty years striven to prevent Chinese from building freedom on the moral, religious, and political traditions of Confucianism.

Still, Glendon's assessment of the Declaration is most often persuasive, and her argument about its key role in the modern human rights movement is convincing. Her portrait of Eleanor Roosevelt is unexpected, warm, and affecting. In *A World Made New*, Glendon is reclaiming not only Mrs. Roosevelt but the Universal Declaration itself from conservative skepticism. Flawed, yes, she asserts, but so are we all and so are all our own efforts to promote human rights. When a small group of dedicated men and women produce a document that has been so useful to the protection of human rights in so many lands for over half a century, she suggests, perfectionism is hardly an appropriate standard for us to employ. Fairness compels that we recognize what they achieved and understand how they did it. Here, with warmth and elegance, she tells the story.

The Death of Character
by James Davison Hunter

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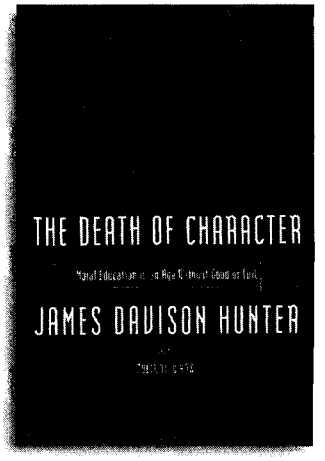

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What the Good Man Knows

LAW WITHOUT VALUES: THE LIFE, WORK, AND LEGACY OF JUSTICE HOLMES. By ALBERT W. ALSCHULER. *University of Chicago Press. 332 pp. $30.*

***Reviewed by* Phillip E. Johnson**

THE GREAT JUSTICE Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. penned a host of memorable aphorisms that summarize his legal philosophy: "The life of the law has not been logic, it has been experience"; "The prophecies of what the courts will do in fact, and nothing more pretentious, are what I mean by the law"; "The duty to keep a contract at common law means a prediction that you must pay damages if you do not keep it—and nothing else"; "I often doubt whether it would not be a gain if every word of moral significance could be banished from the law altogether, and other words adopted which should convey legal ideas uncolored by anything outside the law." Most memorably of all, "If you want to know the law and nothing else, you must look at it as a bad man, who cares only for the material consequences which such knowledge enables him to predict, not as a good one, who finds his reasons for conduct, whether inside the law or outside of it, in the vaguer sanctions of conscience."

Albert Alschuler shows that those sentiments add up to a cold nihilism which Holmes' many admirers have tried to soften by imagining that he was merely being provocative when he repeatedly stated his firm conviction that life is a struggle in which might makes right. The pious legend of Holmes as the progressive "Yankee from Olympus" whose jurisprudence prefigured the New Deal is a hoax perpetrated by a clique led by Felix Frankfurter and Harold Laski. Holmes' equally talented father, an innovating physician and essayist, portrayed his son as The Young Astronomer, brilliant but aloof from the lives of others. The young Holmes was a zealous abolitionist, but he lost enthusiasm for this and all other causes during the Civil War, where he was wounded three times and saw comrades slain in the bloodiest battles. In maturity, Holmes was a consistent social Darwinist who glorified struggle regardless of the cause, and who could be brutally indifferent to suffering. Holmes' official biographers have not been able to complete their task, at least partly because those who look too closely at the man feel more repugnance for their subject than official biographers are allowed to feel.

For all his brilliance, Alschuler argues, Holmes' legal scholarship often wasn't too sound either. He cultivated the myth that he had overcome a dry conceptual formalism in the law and replaced it with a realistic jurisprudence attuned to the needs of the day. However, no one has been able to find any specimens of the stereotypical conceptualizers whom Holmes supposedly vanquished. Certainly William Blackstone and Christopher Columbus Langdell, often cited as Holmes' targets, were as alert to the value of experience as Holmes was; it ought to be clear to *any* practicing lawyer that the life of the law requires both experience and logic. Despite his reputation, there were occasions when Holmes himself could be accused of formalism, of being blind to the lessons of experience. For example, his torts scholarship failed to confront the reality of rampant industrial accidents in an age before government regulation of capitalism. He thought that the liability of an employer for the torts of his employees should be construed narrowly as a relic of the Roman law of master and slave, and he was in general content to leave without remedy employees injured by unsafe working conditions.

What Holmes was fighting was not formalism but the natural law tradition, the philosophy that there is an objective moral order ascertainable by reason. Taking the Darwinian revolution into the law, Holmes rejected the antebellum idea of natural justice in favor of a supposedly scientific legal positivism that identified law only with power. But any legal order must make some attempt to link the concept of law with the concept of justice.

Alschuler points out that the "bad man" whose perspective was decisive for Holmes does not really care about predicting judicial decisions as much as he cares about what the law enforcement agencies will do if he tries to get away with a crime. From the bad man's standpoint, obligations imposed by legislation or court decisions are no more deserving of respect than those imposed by a rob-

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ber at gunpoint. Yet, as Alschuler argues, any jurisprudence worthy of the name has to be able to distinguish the rule of law from the rule of the gunman writ large, but Holmes scarcely made the attempt. It would make considerably more sense to define "law" as the set of obligations that a *good* man will find presumptively authoritative, bearing in mind that there are undeniably occasions in which a higher morality permits or even requires disobedience to positive law. Alschuler illustrates the complexity of the relationship between law and morality with thought-provoking discussions of applications of the fugitive slave laws (possibly binding on Northern judges but certainly not on escaping slaves) and the 1944 plot against Hitler (even assassination can be justifiable under extreme circumstances).

IF ALSCHULER'S analysis is accurate, how did Holmes attain such a misleading reputation? To begin with, he really was an intellectual giant, with a gift for crafting memorable sentences, and some of his positions happened to mesh with progressive objectives that he did not actually share. Holmes dissented when the Supreme Court overturned economic regulations as violating substantive due process or freedom of contract not because he favored the regulations, but because he thought that the forces which dominated the political branches should be allowed to govern in their own way. He voted for results that favored labor unions even though he thought that union successes tended mainly to impoverish other workers, because his philosophy of struggle implied that unions should be allowed to employ their most powerful weapons. He was originally unsympathetic to freedom of speech claims, going so far as to hold that a municipality was not required to allow free speech in a park since it had no obligation to establish the park in the first place. Much later, under the influence of the liberal Justice Louis Brandeis, he wrote a dissent that laid the cornerstone for modern free speech doctrine, and thus came down to history as a champion of First Amendment freedoms. By the end of his long life in 1935, Holmes was virtually a national monument, and liberal intellectuals found it convenient to portray him positively as a forerunner of the new governing philosophy.

Religious considerations may also have played a role. David Hollinger, professor of American intellectual history at Berkeley, suggests in *Science, Jews, and Secular Culture* that secularized Jews wanted to promote the rep-

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utation of a Yankee aristocrat who was so emphatically non-Christian. "Holmes' influence promised, then, to help release American culture from a Christian bias that most Jewish intellectuals found provincial at best and that at worst provided a basis for continued prejudice against Jews and other non-Christians."

I HAVE TAUGHT Holmes' seminal lecture on "The Path of the Law" to law students for many years, and have noted that it "has been so influential in shaping the thinking of American lawyers that it might be described as almost part of the Constitution." As a thinker Holmes was a great destroyer in the mold of Hume or Nietzsche, a tradition that continued in debased form in the century of Russell, Foucault, and Derrida. The destroyers are skeptics who scoff at any morality that requires reference to a creator, since such ideas have supposedly been discredited by the advance of knowledge. Yet in doing so they are left with no foundation for moral knowledge, and must get by with notions of liberation, struggle, and propaganda. As I ask my students, "Where did Holmes go wrong—or was he right after all?"

Alschuler thinks that the grand old man went wrong because of the disillusioning effect of his traumatic Civil War experience, and because his scientific positivist epistemology denied that such things as moral principles could be discerned by reason. A better modernist epistemology teaches that we can have knowledge of right and wrong even where we cannot have proof, applying concepts like coherency, reflective equilibrium, and inference to the best explanation. Experience with modern totalitarians has been as effective a teacher for us as the Civil War was for Holmes. Although we recognize the shaky foundations of moral philosophy in a post-Darwinian culture, we are as certain that Hitler and Stalin were morally wrong as we are of the simple truths of arithmetic or scientific observation. The skeptical position that there is no moral knowledge is untenable.

As I finished this very readable and illuminating book, I found that I was at a familiar starting point. It is the intuitive truth that C. S. Lewis begins with in *Mere Christianity*. We live in a world where evil exists in plenty, and often prospers. Moral skeptics have the best superficial arguments. But the life of the mind is a combination of logic and also experience, rightly interpreted. A mind in good condition knows that a philosophy that does not provide a foundation for moral knowledge is inadequate. If you want to know about the law, and everything else, you must think as a good person (because we know that there really is such a thing), and affirm what every good person knows, and what every bad person also knows but suppresses. There is a real good and a real evil, and the rule of law is a mechanism for maximizing the former and minimizing the latter.

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How Best to Help the Poor

FIGHTING POVERTY WITH VIRTUE: MORAL REFORM AND AMERICA'S URBAN POOR, 1825-2000. By JOEL SCHWARTZ. *Indiana University Press. 480 pp. $39.95.*

Reviewed by **Keith Pavlischek**

IN THE INTRODUCTION to this book Joel Schwartz calls our attention to the titles of two major pieces of antipoverty legislation. The War on Poverty was ushered in by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, whereas welfare reform was more recently enacted in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The contrast between the names, Schwartz suggests, "points to the growing recognition that economic opportunity can be seized by the poor only to the extent that they accept personal responsibility."

This change, says Schwartz, is more than simply a turn away from the War on Poverty; it marks a healthy return

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to the antipoverty strategy of moral reformers of the nineteenth century. Schwartz's study of this period focuses on the rhetoric and actions of four largely forgotten figures: Joseph Tuckerman (1778-1840), a Unitarian minister to the poor of Boston in the 1820s and '30s; Robert M. Hartley (1796-1881), the founder and guiding spirit of New York's Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor; Charles Loring Brace (1826-1890), who established and headed the New York Children's Aid Society; and Josephine Russell Shaw (1843-1905), a founder and leading theoretician of New York's Charity Organization Society. Schwartz sums up the views of the moral reformers of the nineteenth century by saying that to them "the poor were most effectively aided when armed with the power to help themselves, and that they could best help themselves by practicing humble virtues like diligence, sobriety, and thrift."

Stated so simply and starkly, one might imagine that Schwartz would be sympathetic to the libertarian side of the welfare reform debate. If "bad charity" and government-run programs drive out "good charity," as libertarians argue, the best thing government could do would be to get out of the way and allow faith-based and other charities to do their work. This supposedly is the way charity functioned before government messed things up.

But Schwartz shows that the moral reformers increasingly came to recognize the need for political and structural reform, and gradually came to favor government regulation of the economy. Structural reforms, however, were seen not as a substitute for personal virtue but as a complement and perhaps even a precondition of moral reform, especially when the reformers concluded that the virtues practiced by the poor were not being sufficiently rewarded by the market. Brace, for example, supported social insurance as a supplement to individual savings and thrift, and Lowell advocated collective bargaining and maximum-hour laws to increase the likelihood that diligence would be justly rewarded.

Schwartz observes that the emphasis on moral reform was plausible only as long as the "bourgeois" or "individualistic" virtues were understood as intrinsically admirable and applicable to the poor as well as to the middle class. But while diligent, sober, and thrifty people usually avoided pauperism, toward the end of the nineteenth century it became less clear that moral virtues were sufficient to

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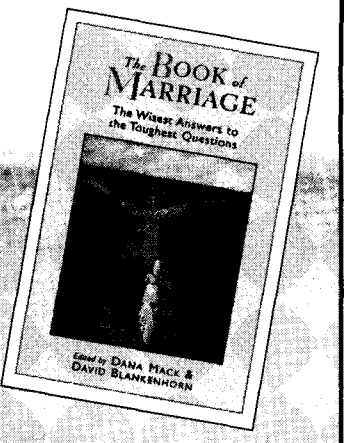

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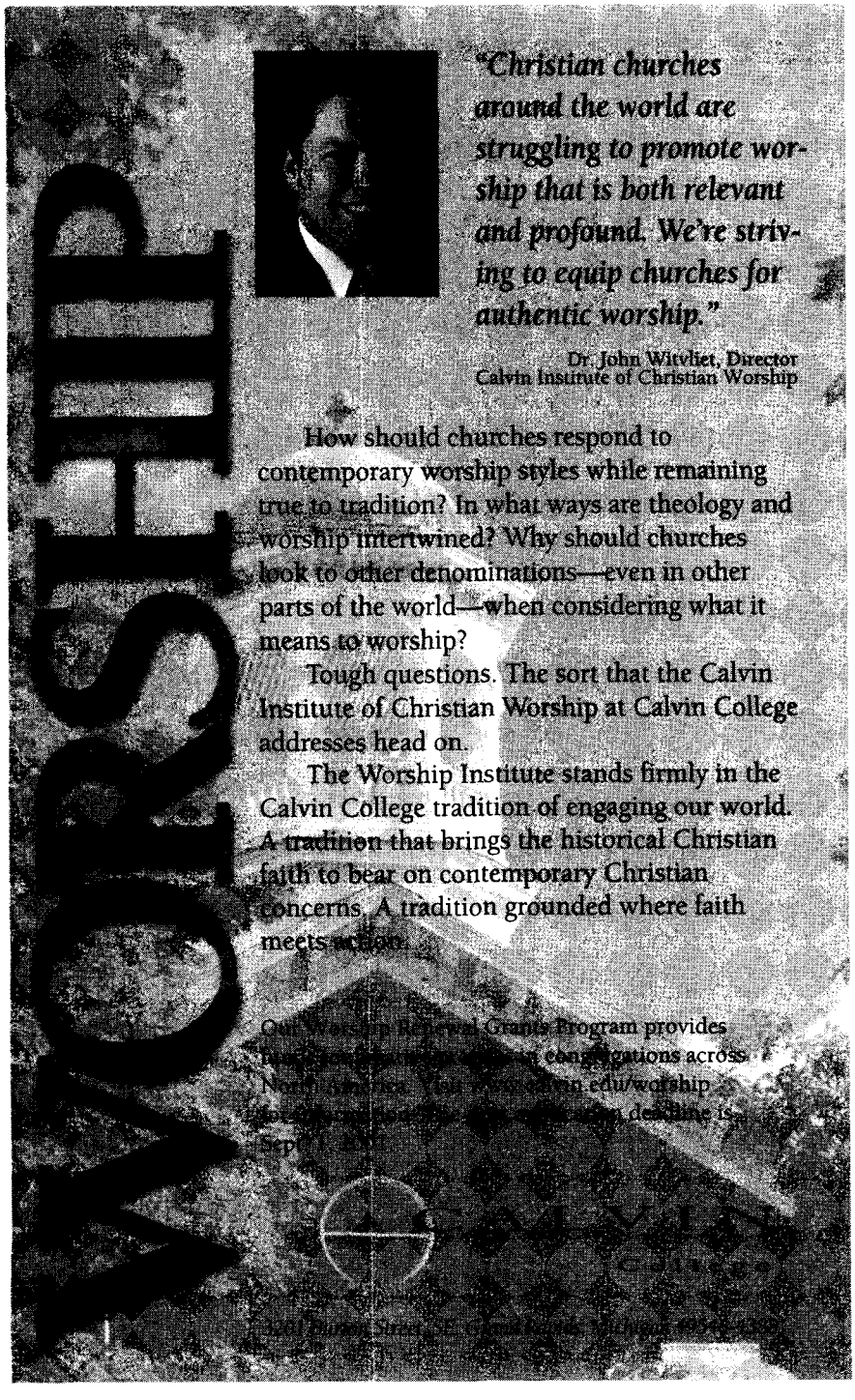
lift even the most morally virtuous out of poverty. Radical critics came to question whether the moral reformers' emphasis on individual responsibility had any place at all in helping the poor. Schwartz captures the theoretical alternative confronting turn-of-the-century poverty workers:

> Did the economic evolution away from laissez-faire chiefly reflect the recognition that individualistic moral virtues were not omnipotent in and of themselves (and stood in need of governmental action to become more effective)? Or did the push toward collectivism in economics also reflect a belief that the individualism characterizing the virtues promulgated by moral reformers was somehow problematic morally, not just economically? Was the economic rejection of laissez-faire joined to a moral revolution in which virtues like diligence, sobriety, and thrift fell into disrepute?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THE PIVOTAL FIGURES—and villains—in Schwartz's narrative are Jane Addams, the founder of Hull House in Chicago, a settlement house that became a training ground for social workers, and Walter Rauschenbusch, the founder of the American social gospel movement. Schwartz persuasively demonstrates that despite their considerable common ground with the earlier moral reformers, Addams and Rauschenbusch rejected the earlier reformers' basic expectation that the poor could and should be expected to take steps to improve their condition. To some degree this was because they both came to doubt, with some justification, the efficacy of promoting individual upward mobility in the industrial era. But the critique was more fundamental than that, and ultimately more pernicious.

Addams came to question the very capacity of the poor to help themselves. They were often, in her view, too "primitive," "emotional," and deficient in the "sense of prudence" to take the sort of self-advancing actions that characterized the middle class. Rauschenbusch, for his part, attacked individualistic virtues on theological grounds.

In preaching and encouraging the moral virtues, the early reformers assumed that the poor—like the non-poor—were motivated by a self-interest that was unproblematic from either a moral or theological standpoint. Like all of us, the poor were self-interested. For the moral reformers, a key to reducing poverty was to

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teach them to be more effectively self-interested and to teach self-interest "rightly understood." But Rauschenbusch wanted to supplant individualistic virtues with "new motives" for acting. It was not enough to make the poor better accumulators, he argued, because accumulation itself was suffused with selfishness. The proper aim was not to achieve more effective self-seeking, but to replace self-seeking with altruism.

This view led him to criticize, for example, the virtue of thrift, which supposedly contradicted the spirit of Christianity. While Brace had supported social insurance to supplement individual efforts at personal savings and thrift, Rauschenbusch made the far more radical argument that social insurance should *replace* individual efforts, which were morally suspect because self-seeking. Similarly, Rauschenbusch rejected the "sanctified common sense" displayed by Tuckerman in his critique of indiscriminate charity in favor of what Schwartz calls "an almost fundamentalist faith in the accuracy and continued relevance of Jesus' economics." I think it more accurate to say that Rauschenbusch took the Sermon on the Mount to be a discourse in political economy, which it is not. He thus regarded the more moderate and practical Christian economics of Tuckerman and Brace as a "dulling of Christ's teaching." Schwartz concludes that Addams and Rauschenbusch could be more accurately understood as "moral transformers rather than reformers." They could not venerate virtues that had the tinge of "self-interest" and that stood in the way of the creation of a society dedicated to collective virtue (Addams) or Christian altruism (Rauschenbusch).

SCHWARTZ ARGUES that central components of the ruling paradigm in late-twentieth-century America were present in embryonic form in the writings of Addams and Rauschenbusch: "Self-advancing action could be expected from the middle class, but not the poor; the responsibility for self-defeating action (or inaction) could legitimately be lodged only with society, never with the poor." Their critique of individual moral virtues eventually became a wholesale rejection of any role for personal responsibility in fighting poverty—a position that characterized much thinking about poverty a generation ago. Schwartz finds this view most prominent in the work of William Ryan's *Blaming the Victim* (1971) and Francis Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward's *Regulating the Poor* (1971). The titles tell the story—to stress individualistic virtues is to blame the poor for their condition and amounts to a form of "social control."

There is a good deal of irony in the shifting attitudes of reformers and radicals toward the sources of poverty. For the nineteenth-century immigrant poor, Schwartz argues, structural reforms were actually more important than the moral reformers supposed. The urban immigrant poor were poor because they were immigrants, not because they were lazy or profligate, and so they were less in need of training in the virtues than they were of political and economic reform. But today, after extensive structural reforms have been enacted and extensive public money spent on poverty-fighting programs, the self-defeating behavior of the poor plays more of a role in their poverty than was true earlier. The analysis and teaching of the nineteenth-century moral reformers is more pertinent today, Schwartz believes, than it was then.

Schwartz asks whether the difference in ethnic composition of the two poverty populations matters. Can an urban antipoverty strategy designed for European immigrants offer useful guidance for today's urban poverty population, which is disproportionately, though not predominantly, African American? In large measure, the nineteenth-century urban poor began to act more virtuously because they were expected to do so. Schwartz notes that the black poor of the late twentieth century have been less receptive to a message of virtue. That is true in part because racial discrimination has often unjustly denied them success as a reward for virtue. It is also the case, however, that other Americans have been more hesitant than their nineteenth-century predecessors to convey the message of personal responsibility. One might say that the black urban poor (to paraphrase a line often used by President Bush) suffer under the soft bigotry of low moral expectations. Schwartz hopefully calls attention to figures within today's black community—Floyd Flake and Eugene Rivers, for example—who are unafraid to emphasize the role of moral responsibility among the poor in fighting poverty.

SCHWARTZ'S BOOK IS a valuable contribution to the growing literature on poverty and welfare reform, and his emphasis on teaching and insisting upon personal responsibility among the poor is gaining a wide consensus across the political spectrum (although one can expect the professional social work guild to be the last on the train). The key public policy argument now is less over *whether* personal responsibility is to be taught to and expected of the poor than *how* and *by whom* it is to be taught—and how government can most effectively aid such efforts. The key debate as to the *how* is now over the extent to which the virtues can be promoted by incentives (the view of William Julius Wilson) as opposed to mandates (the view of Lawrence Mead).

As to who can most effectively deliver the message, Schwartz observes that in the nineteenth century the emphasis on personal responsibility was more effectively received among immigrant Irish Catholics when it was conveyed by the Catholic, preferably Irish Catholic, hierarchy than by Anglo-Saxon Protestants. That lesson

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lies at the heart of the current discussion over "charitable choice." The public policy task now before us is two-fold: first, to figure out how to incorporate the insight that who delivers the message matters, and second, to discern how best to take advantage of the numerous "faith-based" and local community organizations that can most effectively address the needs of the poor, including the need for personal responsibility. That, no doubt, is one of the major tasks before the new White House Office on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

Thinking Through Vatican II

HISTORY OF VATICAN II, VOLUME II: THE FORMATION OF THE COUNCIL'S IDENTITY, FIRST PERIOD AND INTERCESSION, OCTOBER 1962-SEPTEMBER 1963. Edited by Giuseppe Alberigo; English edition edited by Joseph A. Komonchak. *Orbis/Peeters. 603 pp. $80.*

HISTORY OF VATICAN II, VOLUME III: THE MATURE COUNCIL, SECOND PERIOD AND INTERCESSION, SEPTEMBER 1963-SEPTEMBER 1964. Edited by Giuseppe Alberigo; English edition edited by Joseph A. Komonchak. *Orbis/Peeters. 532 pp. $80.*

Reviewed by **George Weigel**

THESE TWO HEFTY (and ridiculously expensive) volumes, the second and third in a five-volume series being produced by an international team of scholars under the leadership of Giuseppe Alberigo, an Italian layman and historian, bring the story of Vatican II to its chronological mid-point. They also demonstrate that, by September 1964, the direction of the Council was firmly set and that the third and fourth "periods" of Vatican II (in the autumn months of 1964 and 1965, respectively) were a matter of playing out in detail the tack taken by the Council's reformist majority during the first and second periods, and during the all-important "intercession" between the first two formal conciliar sessions. Indeed, one of the strengths of this series is its exploration of the crucial role played by the "intercession" discussions, in Rome and elsewhere, which profoundly shaped what happened during the Council's actual meetings.

As I indicated in my review of Volume I of this series (see FIRST THINGS, November 1996), the great challenge to any history of Vatican II is to avoid what might be called the "Cowboys and Indians" interpretation of the Council, in which a small, hardy band of courageous liberals is finally vindicated when it crushes its intransigent, Curia-led conservative opposition and launches the Catholic Church into a new dialogue with the modern world. Professor Alberigo's team is not altogether successful in avoiding this temptation in Volumes II and III. But the wealth of detail assembled in each of these books, despite the occasionally skewed selection of materials and reference points, is such that the careful reader can make his own interpretive judgments, and can do so in a much more informed way.

Volume II rightly stresses two crucial moments in the dynamics of the Second Vatican Council. The first of these was Pope John XXIII's opening address of October 11, 1962, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* (Mother Church Rejoices). That address is remembered by proponents of the "Cowboys and Indians" hermeneutic for its unexpectedly sharp dismissal of those ecclesiastical "prophets of gloom" who "in these modern times can see nothing but prevarication and ruin." No doubt such nay-sayers about the Christian possibility in the late twentieth century had to be challenged. But with what? As a close reading of Andrea Riccardi's fine chapter on "The Tumultuous Openings Days of the Council" makes clear, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* was a summons to the Catholic Church to think of itself less in institutional terms and more as an evangelical movement in history—a movement which best served the modern world by telling the world the truth about human origins, human nature, human community, and human destiny. As the Cowboys and Indians alike have continued their power struggle in the almost four decades after *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, readers of that remarkable statement can only conclude that its prophetic message to the Church has yet to be fully heard.

THE SECOND pivotal moment in the Council's first period was more protracted, and involved a series of interventions from bishops throughout the world between November 14 and December 8, 1962. During these three weeks of debate, the bishops made the crucial intellectual shift from a juridical model of the Church (rooted in a concept of the Church as "perfect society" that was far too beholden to the state as the paradigm of a "society") to a more richly biblical and theological conception of both the *Una Sancta* and the bishops' responsibilities in it. Giuseppe Ruggieri's useful chapter on this momentous change is marred by what seems, in some quarters, an irresistible temptation to get in a few digs at Joseph Ratzinger, who as a young theologian and advisor to Cologne's Joseph Cardinal Frings played a seminal role in this development in ecclesiological consciousness.

Councils have their politics, of course, and these two key conceptual shifts could get the traction they needed in the actual work of Vatican II because of two other important decisions in the Council's first peri-

GEORGE WEIGEL's Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II *is an international bestseller. The expanded English paperback edition was released recently by HarperCollins.*

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od: the early postponement of a series of votes on the Council's working commissions, which blocked a Curial attempt to stack the commissions with reliably unadventurous bishops, and John XXIII's decision ten days into the Council to make the Secretariat for Christian Unity a full conciliar commission. Under the leadership of the German Jesuit biblical scholar (and former confessor to Pius XII) Augustin Bea, the Secretariat emerged as the primary vehicle for advancing the agenda of those who really grasped the meaning of *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia.*

Volume II suffers from several deficiencies, which are nonetheless instructive for the light they cast on the contemporary Catholic academy and its shibboleths. Father Gerald Fogarty, S.J., of the University of Virginia rightly reminds us that the Cuban Missile Crisis broke out publicly less than two weeks after Vatican II formally opened, creating an atmosphere of profound political concern that could not help but shape the Council's deliberations. But Fogarty, following the lead of Norman Cousins, gives what most historians would reckon as far too much credit to John XXIII as the "catalyst needed to ward off an impending nuclear holocaust." Jan Grootaers' otherwise valuable chapter on the "intercession" between the first and second periods of the Council, which saw the election of Pope Paul VI and what Grootaers rightly calls the "second preparation" of Vatican II, betrays virtually no understanding of how the Orthodox Churches of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact were manipulated by the KGB and its allied intelligence services. This vastly complicated both the Council's ecumenical initiatives and the relations between the Secretariat for Christian Unity (which occasionally seemed unaware of the manipulation issues, too) and Eastern-rite Catholic Churches like the persecuted Greek Catholic Church of Ukraine. Given these lacunae, Grootaers' uncritical celebration of the new Vatican *Ostpolitik* is both predictable and unpersuasive.

Pope John Paul II, who was one of the youngest Council fathers during the first period, has insisted for almost four decades that the Council can be grasped in its essence only if we think of it as an epic spiritual event, at which the Holy Spirit led the Catholic Church into a new encounter with modernity precisely for the sake of evangelizing the modern world. That view, which takes us far beyond ecclesiastical Cowboys and Indians, is beautifully captured in Volume II by Bishop Gabriel-Marie Garrone of France, reflecting in his diary on what the bishops experienced when they looked around the Council *aula*:

> The Church today is experiencing what might be called the physical reality of its universality. We believed in this, we proclaimed it in our Creed; now, for numerous reasons, *it has come home to us in a sensible way.* Distant peoples, who used to be only names on a map to us . . . are in many cases acquiring a face and coming very near to us: it used to be a country, now it is a group of human beings. Suddenly and forcefully we understand what it means to say that Christ is King of the universe, for this universe is there before our eyes. At the same time, however, the Church grasps with a kind of amazement the real limits of this kingdom: Haiti, Goa, Katanga, Kuwait are no longer mere ideas but human beings for whom Christ died. . . . Here you have the soul of the Council.

The discovery of that soul was the chief achievement of the Council's first period in the fall of 1962; the

When you hear the phrase "Great Tradition," what do you think of? If it's Boethius and not baseball, Acton but not alternative music, Shusako Endo and definitely not Robert James Waller, and if the letters G.K. warm your heart, while the words Gender Studies leave you a bit uneasy, then you just might enjoy working for us.

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exploration of what that universality might mean ecclesiologically and liturgically was the business of Vatican II's second period, which met in the fall of 1963 and is the subject of Volume III of *History of Vatican II.*

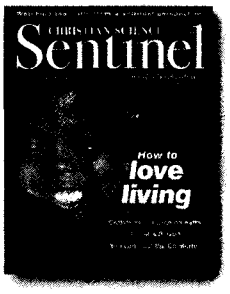
THE LEAST SATISFYING chapter of Volume III goes into painstaking, even excruciating, detail on the evolution of the conciliar document that would most directly affect most Catholic lives around the world: the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.* Unfortunately, Reiner Kaczynski provides no analysis—celebratory, critical, or otherwise—of the ideas of the twentieth-century liturgical movement, which profoundly shaped the *Constitution* and, even more, its implementation. As those ideas are now under serious criticism, the result is a history of the *Constitution* in an intellectual vacuum.

Of far more interest in Volume III are the number of contemporary issues and controversies whose origins can be traced to the Council's second period. Foremost among these is the question of the role of the college of bishops in the governance of the universal Church. Contemporary proposals for a Vatican III, or for a Synod of Bishops with legislative authority, or for a super-congregation of bishops that would, in some presently undefined manner, occupy a position between the Pope and the Roman Curia, are all anticipated in the ecclesiological debates of the Council's second session. So is the recent reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement, with the World Council of Churches abandoning the goal of Christian unity restored on the basis of agreements about "faith and order," and the Catholic Church picking up the fallen banner of classic ecumenism by insisting that the unity worth pursuing must be unity in the truth that Christ bequeathed to his Church. (Throughout Volume III, as in Volume II, it is striking to learn just how nervous Geneva was about what Rome's entry into the ecumenical lists would mean.)

Then there is the question of the role of theology and theologians in the Church. In the concluding chapter to Volume III, editor Alberigo frankly admits that, for many theologians, "the dynamic clash of ideas" at the Council "was much more attractive than the dull debates of academia." It is, Professor Alberigo concludes, "much more interesting and gratifying to develop formulations for conciliar discussions than to produce books." Beyond the oddity of that judgment coming from the editor of a five-volume series that bids fair to top out at close to three thousand pages of closely printed text, there is a problem here that is hinted at but never analyzed: the *trahison des clercs,* the seduction of intellectuals by power. No one can doubt that Professor Alberigo is right about the attitude of some theologians at the Council (and afterwards) to the exercise of ecclesiastical clout; but one has to wonder why there is simply no discussion of whether this attitude doesn't pose serious problems for theology.

VOLUME III SHEDS light on the complex personality of Pope Paul VI and on his achievement. It will be remembered that, when John XXIII announced his intention of summoning the Council, then-Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini called a friend and worried out loud, "This holy old boy doesn't realize what a hornet's nest he's stirring up." Giuseppe Alberigo suggests that Montini continued to worry about the hornet's nest after his election as Pope Paul VI, feeling that "he had been given the responsibility to supply Vatican II with the program his predecessor had failed to give it." Alberigo describes this as the difference between the "pragmatic" John XXIII and the "programmatic" Montini. But while "programmatic"

"Our life is what our thoughts make it"
—Marcus Aurelius Antonius



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nicely captures Montini's sensibility, formed as it was in the Curia of Pius XI and Pius XII, one wonders whether "pragmatic" is the *mot juste* for Papa Roncalli. John XXIII seems to me to have been less pragmatic than charismatic.

In any event, Alberigo is surely right in thinking that Montini was disinclined to preside over the kind of conciliar free-for-all with which John XXIII seemed reasonably comfortable. And one doubts that the Council could have been brought to a successful conclusion by anything other than a more "programmatic" pope. Still, the question remains: Did Montini, by making the Council more "programmatic" and less charismatic, contribute inadvertently to the post-conciliar politicization of the Church, in which the evangelical summons of *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* was frequently lost in the midst of ongoing, internal ecclesiastical power struggles? On the other hand, what was the alternative? Large questions, to which there are no simple, or perhaps definitive, answers.

VOLUME III, ALAS, continues the unhappy trend of Volume II in its reading of late-twentieth-century history. There is some interesting information on the *Ostpolitik* buried in a lengthy footnote: West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, it seems, thought the new Vatican attempt at a rapprochement with Khrushchev's Soviet Union was profoundly wrongheaded, and predicted that it would become even more accommodating under Paul VI than under John XXIII. Despite this countervailing evidence, Volume III's general attitude toward the *Ostpolitik* remains uncritically celebratory, and there is, once again, simply no reckoning with the indisputable fact that Mr. Khrushchev was intensifying his persecution of the Catholic Church during the very period in which Giuseppe Alberigo discerns a "thaw" in Soviet-Vatican relations. Professor Alberigo's further comment that "the deterioration of the situation in Vietnam [was] due to the increasing involvement of the United States" does not survive even a moment of informed reflection.

These volumes, which breathe the somewhat stolid air of the European academy, would be even more daunting were it not for the editorial and translation skills of Father Joseph A. Komonchak of the Catholic University of America. Those who will use these valuable, if limited, volumes owe Fr. Komonchak a considerable debt of gratitude.

Taking Federalism Seriously

STATES' RIGHTS AND THE UNION: *IMPERIUM IN IMPERIO*, 1776-1876. By FORREST MCDONALD. *University Press of Kansas. 304 pp. $29.95.*

***Reviewed by* Paul Carrese**

FORREST MCDONALD, the Distinguished Research Professor of History at the University of Alabama, writes that "the most pervasive" problem besetting American politics in its first century after Independence was disagreement about "the nature of the Union and the line to be drawn between the authority of the general government and that of the several states." His compelling narrative ends with the Civil War and Reconstruction, with an epilogue sketching the story up to the recent rediscovery by the U.S. Supreme Court that a principle of federalism limits national power.

Many policy debates in America today, ranging from taxes to education to health care, ultimately concern federalism and the principles it aims to preserve, liberty and equality. A generation ago Herbert Storing, by restoring the Antifederalists' role in America's founding debates, reminded us that American politics is defined both by principles and by debates about principles. Our complex constitutionalism ever concerns how best to balance, in given circumstances, our commitment to principles that don't always fit together easily—liberty and equality, nation and state, progress and tradition, faith and skepticism. McDonald's book reminds us that as long as our politics is healthy we will be discussing how to balance the power of states and the national government.

Federalism guarantees that politics will be messy and complicated. It even includes the possibility that whole and parts become empires in a zero-sum struggle, as with the debates over slavery. Still, our Civil War was not an inevitable consequence of the complex politics of federalism, any more than chattel slavery itself was inevitable. Indeed, federalism, the voluntary union of political societies to form a new state with limited powers while member states retain other powers, provides a middle path between the despotism of empires and the chaos of ethnic or religious separatism.

McDonald begins by noting that a "division of sovereignty with a single jurisdiction" was "generally regarded as impossible, until Americans devised a way of doing it." By the 1780s several future Federalists, unhappy with disorder under the states-oriented Articles of Confederation, began to think that sovereignty could be shared. Their principle, which McDonald finds "both subtle and simple," was this: "Government at various levels had certain responsibilities, and inherent in those responsibilities was the power to carry them into execution." Some properly resided in national authority, some in

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separate states and their localities, and some remained with the people. Still, even from the time the Articles were proposed two distinct voices broke into debate. McDonald describes these as "nationalists" and "states' rights republicans," precursors to the Federalists and Antifederalists, who debated a constitution with a genuine national government to balance the states.

McDonald notes how difficult it was for Washington to keep armies in the field, let alone defeat the British, given a Congress that had little real power and no unitary executive. After the adoption of the Constitution, Washington's Administration and the early Congress were divided between Hamiltonians and Jeffersonians. The Federalists were practically extinguished by the victories of Jefferson's Democratic-Republican party in the 1800 election, leaving the federal judiciary under the new Chief Justice John Marshall as the only national authority not dominated by the states' rights principle.

The defenders both of states' rights and of national authority shifted from region to region and party to party depending upon the issue and upon which group was dominant, which the loyal opposition. Jefferson preached about weak federal government and strict construction of its constitutional power, and had given birth to the doctrines of secession, interposition, and nullification in the 1798 Virginia and Kentucky resolutions, yet he conducted his presidency and led his party with a boldness that surpassed anything Hamilton or Washington ever proposed, let alone attempted. Madison joined with Jefferson on the 1798 resolutions, despite having been an architect of the Constitution and its stronger national government. As McDonald tells the story of the nineteenth century, the aims of life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness caused Americans to oscillate between a natural-born distrust of government as threatening these ends, and a recognition that rights could only be enjoyed if government provided certain kinds of order and activity. Thus Madison later found that a dose of experience—the British burning parts of the nation's capital in the War of 1812—indicated that a more robust national defense and economic plan, including a national bank, were needed.

McDONALD TRACKS the main issues and moves through the era of Jacksonian democracy and the apparent triumph of states' rights, to the rise of slavery as an issue given the expansionism of Manifest Destiny. He weaves the names, phrases, and issues one first learns in school into a coherent narrative about federalism, from the triumvirate of Clay, Calhoun, and Webster, to the contrasting Marshall and Taney Supreme Courts, to the slide toward secession and internecine violence after the Compromise of 1850. He concludes that the "doctrine of states' rights had been stretched to and, as the Civil War would demonstrate, beyond its limits." The Union would survive secession after the bloodiest war yet in human history, but so, too, would the doctrine of states' rights, though both would be significantly altered. Throughout McDonald notes how important Supreme Court rulings were for the American debate about federalism. McDonald's main contention is that the "original understanding" of the Constitution was as a "compact," one "not among sovereign states," nor "of the whole people among themselves," but "among peoples of different political societies, in their capacities as peoples of the several states." This, however, is ambiguously phrased, and McDonald's narrative spells out his notion of compact in debatable ways.

First, McDonald is too bold when claiming that there was "no theory of divided sovereignty" for the American founders to consult. By the 1770s Montesquieu rivaled Locke's influence in America, and in the 1780s and 1790s he and his disciple Blackstone surpassed Locke altogether. Indeed, *Federalist* No. 47 cites Montesquieu as "the oracle" on separation of powers and No. 9 quotes at length his theory of federalism. There Hamilton notes that Montesquieu considers the Hellenic republic of Lycia the best example of federalism, in part because its central council had significant authority. A second, related quibble concerns McDonald's view that the theory and language of the Declaration are shaped largely, or even simply, by Locke. For every passage traceable to the *Second Treatise* there are several more traceable to the English common law tradition and Blackstone's analysis of the English revolution of

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1689, not to mention the numerous phrases borrowed from Protestant Christian confessions. A people influenced by a blend of Enlightenment theory, common law jurisprudence, Protestant creeds, and such complex thinkers as Montesquieu and Blackstone was prone to eventually choose a complicated manner of self-government—indeed, not just separation of powers or federalism, but both.

MCDONALD'S VIEWS ON the theory of federalism and the Declaration fit with the main point of his narrative, that the Constitution is a "compact" among the peoples of the states. He opposes this "original understanding" to two extremes—the view of Jefferson, the later Madison, and the Confederacy that the Union was a league among states, and the view of Marshall, Webster, Lincoln, and even of Andrew Jackson that the Constitution was formed by the people of America, albeit through the instrument of state-based conventions. The difficulty is that McDonald cites two incompatible authorities for his middle view, Madison in *Federalist* No. 39 and John C. Calhoun. As he admits, Calhoun's "compact" theory essentially deepens the states' rights argument of 1798, implying that the Constitution itself harbored doctrines of interposition, nullification, and secession. If this were so, little would have changed from the Articles, for the real power still would lie in the states. McDonald elsewhere recognizes, however, that the genius of the Union involves "strong balancing mechanisms" such that neither nation nor states had total supremacy, but that each had supremacy as to different powers and spheres.

His view of a compact among peoples is more correct when grounded in the early Madison, but *Federalist* No. 39, seeking to parry criticisms about consolidation, fudges the issue. Madison states that the formation of the Union was not national but federal in nature, for it required ratification of the people by state. His characterization of executive power and of the amending process as partly national and partly federal is more accurate, and in fact applies to the formation of the Union. Madison indicates this himself in No. 43 when addressing the illegality, strictly speaking, of superseding the Articles not by unanimous consent of the states but by popular conventions, and in only nine of thirteen states. He declares that the "express authority of the people"—not peoples—"alone could give due validity to the Constitution." The Articles are a mere "compact," a term he never uses regarding the new, more perfect Union, and he cites the Declaration as justifying "society" in bypassing legal details to establish it.

McDonald's strictly Lockean view of the founding supports his adoption of Calhoun's "compact" view, a focus on contract theory and origins that overlooks the American concern for both larger ends and constitutionalism. To secure those ends the American people forged a new instrument, a Constitution, and bound themselves by it. They looked to the more complex constitutionalism of Montesquieu, Blackstone, and the common law tradition precisely so as to leave behind the disorder and weakness yielded by contractarian thought. The "We the People of the United States" who did so had already become one people, as Lincoln argued, in the Declaration and the war.

THE DEBATE about federalism has been so raucous at times because those who lost the ratification debate over the Constitution did so only by a hair's breadth, then soon became the dominant voice in our politics. Still, now more than ever we need to restore the balance between our Lockean individualism and our devotion to constitutional complexity and larger purposes. This is not to take the view of New Dealers. Indeed, for the past century most American political scientists, following Woodrow Wilson, have disdained the principles of our constitutionalism—separation of powers and federalism—as undemocratic, backward looking, and inefficient. We have learned, however, that Wilson's blend of populism and scientific administration yields bureaucrats, demagogues, pollsters, overreaching judges, and journalists who can practice versions of elitism and tyranny quite well.

Forrest McDonald's book restores to us the great debates about a great American principle, federalism, and whether or not one agrees on every point, one is pushed to think seriously and return to the original sources. As McDonald notes, the vitality produced by both federalism and the debate over it meant that, a century after independence, the United States "managed both to remain unburdened by oppressive central authority and to take long strides toward greatness." Whatever success we have had stems in part from appreciating the need for both national and local authority, and from harnessing our constitutional complexity to achieve both individual aims and a common good.

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The Compassionate Amoralist

HUMANITY: A MORAL HISTORY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. BY JONATHAN GLOVER. *Yale University Press. 464 pp. $27.95.*

***Reviewed by* J. Budziszewski**

JONATHAN GLOVER is stirred and troubled by the atrocities of the twentieth century, and wants to know why ordinary people can commit such terrible deeds and how to prevent them. The volume that he gives us is clear, interesting, full of agonized tenderness—and deep in a suffocating darkness. "I have been thinking about this book for most of my adult life," he writes. "Since I first heard about the Nazi genocide, I have wondered how people could bring themselves to commit such acts." But he doesn't so much explain the phenomenon as exhibit it, and the chief exhibition is himself.

This must seem an extraordinary claim, and I will justify it. But first let me explain what the author is trying to do. At the start of the twentieth century, he writes, most people believed in two things: the first was the moral law, written, as Lord Acton said, on the "tablets of eternity," and self-evidently to be obeyed. The second was moral progress: a conviction that "human viciousness and barbarism [are] in retreat." After a century of wickedness beyond fathom, a hundred years in which the tears of tortured millions outflooded the seas, he thinks that sensitive and reflective people can no longer believe such things. There is no moral law; there is no moral progress. The question for post-twentieth-century man is whether, in a twilight beyond good and evil, we can be good; whether, bereft of the moral law, we can achieve a higher morality than hitherto.

It is a strange question. Glover is surely right that after witnessing the evils of the age, only a simpleton could believe that we are making progress. But why does he think the moral law itself discredited? His argument requires it; we depend on the law to recognize transgressions. To say "If there are atrocities, then there is no moral law" is like saying "If there are reckless drivers, then there is no difference between recklessness and taking care."

But it turns out that Glover does not mean exactly the moral law. What he means is what he calls "external" moral law—a law that is given by God. God is the problem, because a wise God would not have ordained a world "in which people are hanged after spending their last night nailed by the ear to a fence, or in which babies are cut out of their mothers' wombs with daggers." A wise God, he thinks, would have *made* man good, or at least made him grow better over time. Glover sides therefore not with God but with Nietzsche, who proclaimed God dead and declared that we must be creators of our own morality. It does not interest him whether God judges the sins of men; because of the sins of men, he judges God.

The fact that Glover objects only to "external" morality solves some puzzles about his project, but not others. In the first place, it would seem that the whole meaning of morality is a rule that we ought to obey whether we like it or not. If so, then the idea of creating a morality we like better is incoherent. Moreover, it would seem that until we *had* created our new morality, we would have no standard by which to criticize God. Since we have not yet created one, the standard by which we judge Him must be the very standard that He gave us. If it is good enough to judge Him by—if it is the whole ground of our complaint—then why do we need a new one?

ALTHOUGH THE AUTHOR does not discuss these puzzles, he does discuss another one. Nietzsche was perceptive enough to realize that anyone who tries to create his own morality will be impeded in two ways: by the riot of impulses within him, each desiring to be master, and by the riot of men around him, each desiring to prevent *him* from being master. To succeed, he would have to be "hard," first to himself, then to those others. They would have to be "suppressed and reduced to imperfect men, to slaves and instruments," or his effort of creation would be stillborn. This is why Nietzsche wrote, "The great majority of men have no right to existence, but are a misfortune to higher men. I do not yet grant the failures the right. There are also peoples that are failures." Granted his mad starting point, his conclusions are perfectly logical. How such a philosophy can provide bulwarks *against* the abominations of the twentieth century is difficult to explain. The Nazis, after all, found this sort of thinking quite invigorating.

Glover admits all of this, but insists that "the Nietzschean nightmare does not follow from Nietzschean premises." He explains that "Nietzsche's self-creation pushes aside people who get in the way, but self-creation can be seen as one value among others. . . . My caring about the sort of person I am motivates the project of self-creation. Why should not my caring about other people set limits to it?"

One good answer to the question is that it misses Nietzsche's point. It is in the nature, not only of the authentic morality, but of the new "moralities," to make claims on people. Sometimes the demands of different moralities come into conflict, and when this happens, either one must give way to the other, or both must give way to a third. If a creative and provident God has already impressed His law upon creation, then one can afford to do the right thing without

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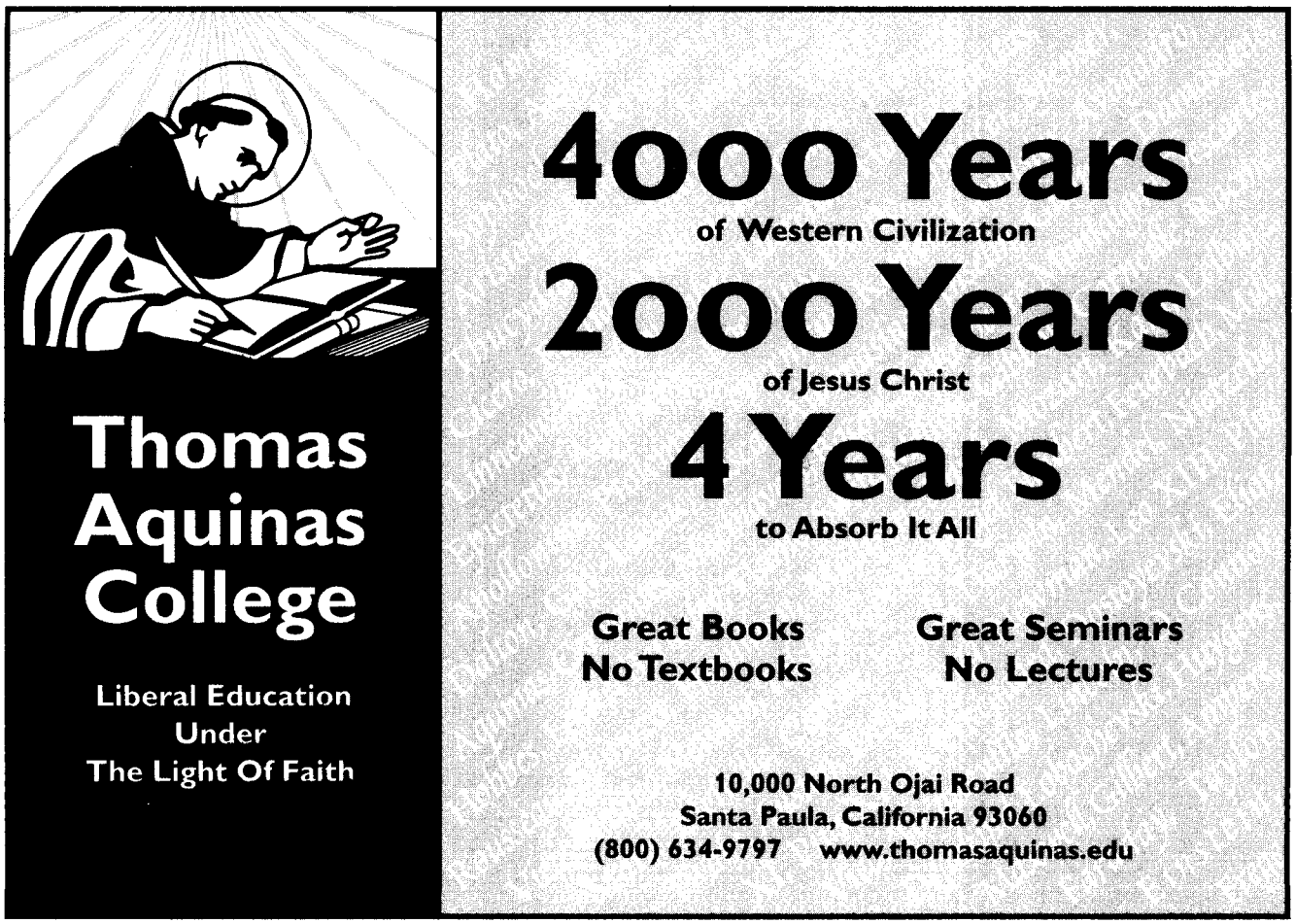
regard for consequences. But if one is trying to impress one's own law upon the world, then one must either break down all resistance, or fail. To put the paradox another way, a law of compassionate restraint is coherent only if it is *not* my own creation; any law that *is* my own creation must be merciless.

Glover, who disagrees, maintains that the project of creating a compassionate new morality will be aided by self-interest, personal identity, and "the human responses." Self-interest fits in because "it is often in our own interest to behave well to other people" and "society usually works to reinforce this." Personal identity is "the way we care about being one sort of person rather than another. . . . I may want to be more confident; I am not the sort of person who takes bribes; I am someone people can talk to; I would not have a haircut like that; I am quite a good parent some of the time; I am glad I am not a television evangelist." Among "the human responses," he calls particular attention to the tendency to respond to people with sympathy and the tendency to respond to them with respect.

NONE OF THE three inspires confidence. As to the first, Glover admits that sometimes it is *not* in our interest to behave well to other people, and sometimes the social pressures in favor of doing so are even reversed. As to the second, if "I am not the sort of person who tortures others" has no firmer foundation than "I would not have a haircut like that," we are in trouble; decent self-images draw strength *from* the moral law, yet the author wants to depend on them *instead of* moral law. As to "the human responses," even Glover recognizes two enormous problems. One is that they can be suppressed; the tyrants of our century learned to neutralize them through policies of emotional distance and deliberate humiliation. It is difficult to respect people whom you are driving naked, breasts and buttocks flapping, from one end of camp to another, and after you have done so they may seem more like cattle to you than like human beings; by mistreating them in certain ways, you have become more able to mistreat them in yet others. The other problem is that the impulses to sympathy and respect have powerful competitors. For as Glover's own sources tell him, destruction can be lovable, mass murder can be a door to ecstasy, and for some men communal killing is "the closest thing to what childbirth is for women: the ini-



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tiation into the power of life and death."

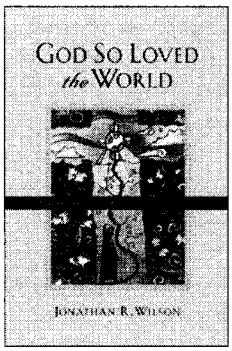
Dare we admit that the problem is greater still? In Glover's post-Nietzschean world there can be no reason to prefer the pangs of sympathy to the ecstasies of destruction *but that you do.* If you don't, there is nothing more to be said. The moral law can tell you which passions to prefer; the passions cannot. To choose, you need a standard which is not a passion. Moreover, as the passions cannot adjudicate themselves, neither can they understand themselves. Only in the light of morality can they recognize their own significance. For what are they *for?* With whom are we to sympathize, to whom shall we pay respect? Shall we "respond" to Franz Stangl, miserable in his confinement at Düsseldorf? Or to the Jews over whose deaths he reigned at Treblinka? Some people find this a difficult question. Some find it easy, but answer "Stangl."

And so we should not be surprised to find that in the end, the quality of Glover's mercy is strained. Why this has not been more widely noticed, I do not know. The book has been wreathed in golden praises, but as Lenin could have explained, every new march of cruelty receives such help. To see the problem we must put Glover's new book in the context of those that preceded it, especially *Causing Death and Saving Lives* (1977) and *Ethics of New Reproductive Technologies* (1989). He says that the relevance of his previous books to the project of building more secure defenses against any revival of Nazi policies is "obvious," and so it is, but not in the way he means. As found in those previous books, here are the facts.

Glover denies that human beings have any "right" to life at all. Personhood, he thinks, is a matter of degree; some humans have more of it than others do. According to him, even some of those who do rate as persons have lives not worth living. One recalls the phrase of the early German euthanasia promoters, *lebensunwertes Leben*—"life unworthy of life"—but Glover goes yet further. Even the principle "it is wrong to destroy a life which is worth living" is too strong for him, for he says one must consider other values, and "there is a tacit 'other things being equal' clause."

Occasionally, he says, it may even be right to kill someone who is not dying and who wants to go on living. He does say that only a monster of self-confidence would feel no qualms about such an act, but he does not say

EXTENDING
the Conversation



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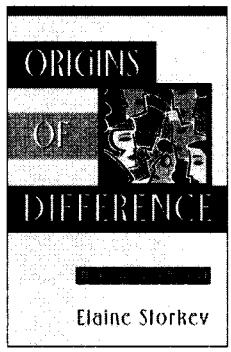

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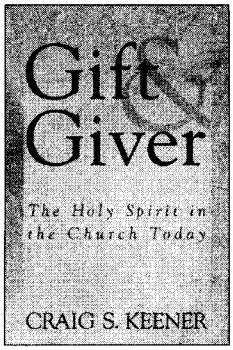

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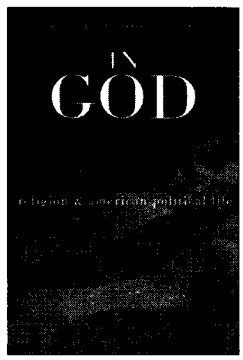

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that only a monster of self-confidence would commit it. For people who do feel squeamish, he has advice: if you are going to kill, then use means that have another desirable effect as well. For example, you might deliberately administer an excessive dose of painkiller. This "has the advantage of perhaps being less distressing to the person who has to carry it out"—and it has a "blurring quality which makes prosecution less likely."

Abortion? Infanticide? Easier still. In Glover's view, neither is "directly" or intrinsically wrong. Abortion should be permitted at any stage, for any reason—even a late abortion for sex selection, or because the mother's pregnancy "will prevent a holiday abroad." After all, he says, unborn babies are "replaceable." So, for that matter, are born ones: "If the mother will have other children instead, it is not directly wrong to prevent *this* foetus or baby from surviving." You can always have a better one later. Infanticide is a slightly different case, but only because killing born babies has stronger effects on third parties than killing unborn babies does. For example, it upsets people more, and it is more likely to set the culture on a slippery slope (as though we weren't on one already). Although Glover considers the side effects of abortion too slight to justify *any* limits, he concedes that the side effects of infanticide may be great enough to justify *some* limits.

What limits on infanticide does he have in mind? He says he doesn't know. Of course they should be worked out "with great explicitness and detail." They will also have to be worked out by those "in a better position to do so." Presumably our controllers would have to experiment not only with different policies about such deeds, but with different ways of reducing their side effects. The lighter they were, the more infanticides could be allowed. Though the author offers no suggestions here, he does offer suggestions for reducing the side effects of abortions. For example, if performing them makes abortionists and their helpers feel distress, then we could regard these people as "especially heroic, doing something intrinsically distasteful which yet prevents much unhappiness." Presumably something like this could also be arranged for the people who work in infanticide centers.

WHAT ARE WE to make of all of this? Jonathan Glover thinks God-given moral law is done for. His own view is that by replacing traditional principles like the sanctity of human life with a morality "less likely to be eroded," his work builds barriers *against* contempt for life. It is hard to see how this could be, especially because his books of ethics employ the same technique of emotional distancing as the torturers that he studies: incomplete persons, replaceable babies, and all the rest. It is equally hard to see why he should object to a world "in which babies are cut out of their mothers' wombs with daggers," but not to one in which mothers invite daggers into their wombs that their babies may be cut out. Psychologists speak of a "Stockholm Syndrome," in which victims come to identify with their persecutors. Perhaps there is a parallel syndrome, in which scholars of atrocity adopt some of the patterns of thinking of their subjects.

But I think a better answer to the riddle of work like this is found in the quotation with which the author begins his concluding chapter; though he quotes to disagree, it stands in quiet witness against his rebellion. "If you have no God then your moral code is that of society. If society is turned upside down, so is your moral code." The words are from a woman who endured Chairman Mao's Great Leap Forward. They apply as well to godless scholars as to godless party members.

BRIEFLY NOTED

EXAMINING THE CATHOLIC INTELLECTUAL TRADITION. Edited by Anthony J. Cernera and Oliver J. Morgan. *Sacred Heart University Press. 234 pp. $24.95.*

The interdisciplinary academic program known as "Catholic Studies" has become something of a trend on both secular and Catholic campuses. For the past several years Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut, has been in the forefront of efforts to establish this new field of studies as a fully respectable discipline. The collection of essays on offer here represents the university's first attempt to set forth before the reading public the results of its efforts so far. It is almost obligatory in reviews of collections of this sort to mention the uneven quality of the essays; and while not all of the essays are of the sterling quality of many of them, what is more striking is the unspoken presence of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, hovering over the proceedings like Poe's Raven. None of the authors here (Monika Hellwig, Louis Dupré, Gerald A. McCool, inter alia) is exactly known for their excessive enthusiasm for *Ex Corde* (and indeed Hellwig earned her salary for a while lobbying against it). But almost all of the authors speak of a dire academic landscape that *Ex Corde* was designed to address—and correct. Hellwig, for example, points out that "U.S. Catholic colleges and universities had in many cases moved unnoticed towards secularization in the seventies and early eighties, to discover with a jolt in the late eighties that without taking thought and action they would not retain their distinctive identities." Similarly, she says that "it is becoming increasingly clear that a critical mass of faculty, administrators, and staff really committed to the Catholic mission of the institution is essential if the character of the institution is to survive. . . . If the fac-

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ulty does not share the ideals of the founders, those ideals will not remain the philosophy and spirit of the institution." As to curriculum, Dupré points out that many Catholic schools have reduced the ideal of a Catholic liberal education to "a few courses on religion, ethics, and a smattering of philosophy in an otherwise wholly pragmatically oriented curriculum." Whether *Ex Corde* will prove to be the catalyst for the solution to these problems remains to be seen, but what this book certainly does tell us is that, at a minimum, *Ex Corde* is not the enemy.

— Edward T. Oakes, S.J.

SIX MODERN MYTHS ABOUT CHRISTIANITY AND WESTERN CIVILIZATION. By PHILIP J. SAMPSON. *InterVarsity. 197 pp. $12.99 paper.*

Someone, maybe Will Rogers, has said that it is amazing how much we know that isn't so. Everyone "knows," for example, that Galileo, courageously defending Copernicus' discovery that the earth revolves around the sun, was roundly condemned by the Inquisition because his conclusions conflicted with the Bible; and everyone "knows" that the history of Christian missionary endeavors is inextricably linked with Western colonialism and oppression of native peoples. But how true are these accounts? The author of this modest but rewarding volume sets out to examine these and four other stories that have taken the form of conventional wisdom regarding history, Christianity, and Western culture. The subject matter includes Darwin's theories and the presumed "warfare between science and religion"; the supposed complicity of Christianity in the rape of the environment; the human body and its "repression" by the Church; and the phenomenon of witchhunting. In the process of exploring these issues, Sampson finds that the standard Enlightenment storyline leaves much to be desired. This book does much to expose the intolerance of supposedly "tolerant" modernity and is highly recommended.

— Jeff McAlister

DOES GOD SUFFER? By THOMAS G. WEINANDY. *University of Notre Dame Press. 310 pp. $22.95 paper.*

This is theology as it should be done. The author, warden of Greyfriars and lecturer in history and doctrine at Oxford, clearly poses the question of his title, examines the answers to the question proposed by Scripture, authoritative tradition, and a wide variety of contemporary thinkers, and then presents his own conviction, persuasively giving the reasons why. His conclusion, posited against many, if not most, influential theologians of the last century, is that God does not suffer. In agreement with almost the entirety of the Christian tradition until recently, and drawing with particular erudition and insight from the patristic literature, Weinandy holds that it is part of the perfection of God that He is impassable, namely, incapable of suffering. Weinandy is particularly effective in explaining why it is precisely the impassability of God that makes both possible and coherent the incarnation of the Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, in Jesus, by which incarnation God experiences and overcomes human suffering *as a human being.* The proponents of God as "our companion in suffering," he argues, finally offer no consolation other than the dubious comfort that God is in as much, or more, trouble than we are. He further contends that such a God is very doubtfully God at all, since He is of the same order of being as we are and therefore not the Creator who is radically other than the creation. Throughout, Weinandy imaginatively engages the Christian tradition in a way that respects the truths of faith as a "mystery" to be explored rather than as "problems" to be solved, thus giving to his entire work the character of intelligently believing humility. Striking also is his treatment of the continuing suffering of the risen Christ in his body, the Church, and our participation in the sufferings of Christ. The discussion is learned and the argument complex, but *Does God Suffer?* is accessible to the patient reader who has no specialized theological training. Do not skip the extensive footnotes, which themselves constitute an education in Christological and Trinitarian thought through the centuries, and, not incidentally, provide a valuable guide to the theological contributions of the Second Vatican Council and John Paul II. For those who are ready for a very thorough intellectual and spiritual workout, this book is warmly recommended.

SOUL MOUNTAIN. By GAO XINGJIAN. *HarperCollins. 511 pp. $27.*

Xingjian, who lives in exile in Paris, was the first Chinese writer to receive the Nobel Prize for literature. The current book is a slow, almost languorous, story of a young man who, having received a false report, discovers he does not have cancer after all and goes off looking for understanding at a mythical Soul Mountain. Along the way are various encounters with monks, prostitutes, sages, criminals, and others who add their distinctive angles of vision on everyday life in China. There are charms here for the patient.

THE MONOCHROME SOCIETY. By AMITAI ETZIONI. *Princeton University Press. 297 pp. $24.95.*

Liberal failures of theory and practice gave rise in the 1970s to an emphasis on community, mediating institutions, and the doctrine of subsidiarity in social policy. In some quar-

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ters this approach came to be called "communitarianism," and Amitai Etzioni has had some success in taking out a copyright on the term. In this collection of essays he addresses questions as various as marriage and divorce, immigration policy, and the importance of national holidays. Of particular interest is a fifteen-page exchange with Robert P. George on the agreements and disagreements between communitarians and social conservatives. The conclusion would seem to be that, where communitarians differ from social conservatives, they are liberals.

THE NEW BELIEVERS: SECTS, "CULTS," AND ALTERNATIVE RELIGIONS. By DAVID V. BARRETT. *Sterling. 544 pp. $29.95.*

An updating of an earlier book whose title was the above subtitle, this is a valuable encyclopedia of a maddening variety of religious movements. The author is British, which explains the disproportionate attention to the U.K., but his reach is very broad and movements in the U.S. are well covered. The subject of "new religions" is a staple in the news, making the book an essential for journalists, but it will also be welcomed by all who are interested in the many forms taken by the intense spiritual churnings of our time.

TWILIGHT OF LIBERTY: THE LEGACY OF THE ACLU. By WILLIAM A. DONOHUE. *Transaction. 368 pp. $29.95 paper.*

First published in 1994, this updated version is a welcome guide to the ways in which the ACLU's constituting mission of protecting civil liberties has frequently degenerated into an ideological crusade against cultural institutions and habits essential to a genuinely free society. The author is president of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights.

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER NOW? MULTICULTURAL CONSERVATISM IN AMERICA. By ANGELA D. DILLARD. *New York University Press. 245 pp. $26.95.*

The author is conflicted. Declaring herself a person of the left, she nonetheless has a sympathetic appreciation of black intellectuals and opinion makers who now call themselves conservative, although they still wage war against an older conservatism driven by racial and class prejudices. She worries that other minorities, notably Hispanic and Asian, will join with more privileged blacks in a "mul-

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ticultural conservatism" at the continuing expense of the black "underclass." As the author is conflicted, the argument is complex and frequently convoluted, but the book provides an intelligent and informative perspective on neglected aspects of America's racial politics.

DEUS LO VOLT! CHRONICLE OF THE CRUSADES. By EVAN S. CONNELL. *Counterpoint. 463 pp. $28 cloth, $16 paper.*

In 1095, Urban II called for the first crusade to reclaim the Holy Land and the people responded, *Deus lo Volt*—God wills it! Connell adopts the device of a soldier who fought for Good King Louis of France two hundred years later, telling the story of what happened, siege by siege, massacre by massacre, victory by victory, and ending up by not being sure what is was all about. Despite the repetitiveness, the narrating does have the ring of authenticity.

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THE HUMAN CONDITION. ULTIMATE REALITIES. RELIGIOUS TRUTH. Three volumes, edited by Robert Cummings Neville. *State University of New York Press. 337, 362, 336 pp. $73.50, $73.50, $78.50 cloth; $24.95, $24.95, $26.95 paper.*

Neville is dean of the School of Theology at Boston University and director of the Comparative Religious Ideas Project, from which these volumes issue. He is also author or coauthor of many of these scholarly essays which demonstrate, as Peter L. Berger, codirector of the project, writes in the introduction to *The Human Condition*, that religious pluralism need not result in either fanaticism or relativism but can lead to honest dialogue on the basis of what he calls "natural reason." The books are a valuable contribution to the academic study of living religion, and the extensive treatments of Hinduism and Islam will be of interest to general readers unfamiliar with those traditions.

TROUBLEMAKER: THE LIFE AND HISTORY OF A. J. P. TAYLOR. By KATHLEEN BURK. *Yale University Press. 493 pp. $35.*

A wantonly prolific writer of books and daily journalism, and a regular on British chat shows, A. J. P. (Alan) Taylor was perhaps best known for his book claiming that Hitler more or less inadvertently stumbled into World War II, having no coherent plan for conquest or for much of anything else. As a historian he wrote in a

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straightforward manner, attending to power relationships between states and unbothered by big questions of meaning. Typical is his recounting of a teenage moment at school in York: "I was sitting in the art room and looking through its big window across to The Minster when I had a revelation just like Saul's on the road to Damascus. A voice said: 'There is no God.' I had never thought about religion before; I had taken it for granted. From that moment Christian's burden fell from my back for ever." So that's that, then. His books, journalism, and television appearances earned him a good deal of money to support his children and three wives, and Kathleen Burk, who studied with Taylor, devotes much attention to who paid him how much for what. His was, one gathers, a very busy and rather empty life.

THE DICTIONARY OF HISTORICAL THEOLOGY. Edited by Trevor A. Hart. *Eerdmans. 599 pp. $50.*

Of the making of such reference books there is no end in sight, and a good thing that is. Every such book is the subject of quibbling about who and what is included and who and what is not, but this one is particularly uneven. A dictionary of "historical" theology should not suggest that so much of the history of theology was made in the twentieth century, or that so much of it was made by Anglicans in England. To cite but one example, Don Cupitt, a kind of English John Spong, gets more attention than John Henry Newman. And the platitudinous puffery under "Black Theology" is an embarrassment. At the same time, there are many insightful entries by the authorities in the pertinent fields. In sum, a very mixed bag but, as is the way with mixed bags, some pleasant surprises.

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO CHRISTIAN ETHICS. Edited by Robin Gill. *Cambridge University Press. 290 pp. $59.95 cloth, $19.95 paper.*

Intended to provide an overview of the state of the academic discipline known as Christian ethics, this book achieves its purpose with essays by eighteen veterans of that enterprise.

GROWTH IN AGREEMENT II. Edited by Jeffrey Gros et al. *Eerdmans. 941 pp. $45 paper.*

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cludes the reports and agreed upon statements issuing from official dialogues between Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and various Protestant communions. Of particular interest to professional ecumenists and students of the ecumenical movement.

JOHN PAUL II: A PERSONAL PORTRAIT OF THE POPE AND THE MAN. By RAY FLYNN. *St. Martin's. 204 pp. $22.95.*

Written with the help of Robin Moore (author of *The French Connection*) and Jim Vrabel, this book by the former ambassador to the Holy See (1993-1997) and popular mayor of Boston (1984-1993) provides a personal account of one man's experience as a diplomat at the Vatican and his occasional encounters with the Pope. Mr. Flynn does not claim to have been on intimate terms with John Paul II, but he does have an intimate knowledge of the Clinton Administration's dealings with the Holy See. As he makes clear, for the most part those dealings were hamfisted, especially when it came to Washington's efforts to establish abortion as a "human right" in international law. The book is an enjoyable read that once again underscores the moral and spiritual stature of John Paul II on the world stage.

THERE WE STOOD, HERE WE STAND: ELEVEN LUTHERANS REDISCOVER THEIR CATHOLIC ROOTS. Edited by Timothy Drake. *1stBooksLibrary (www.1stbooks.com). 168 pp. $15.54 paper.*

Lutherans who have in recent years entered into full communion with the Catholic Church tell their stories and reasons why. Evident in almost all cases is an abiding gratitude for their Christian experience as Lutherans and a graced stubbornness—which some might say is typical of Lutherans—about pressing questions of theological truth. Foreword by Richard John Neuhaus.

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

The End Of Abortion And The Meanings Of "Christian America"

(The thirteenth in a series of reflections on the theme of "Christian America.")

Who belongs to the community for which we accept common responsibility? That, I would suggest, is the question that defines the disagreement over abortion law. The history of "Christian America" can be invoked, and is invoked, by all sides in this dispute. There are religious coalitions, mainly drawn from mainline/oldline Protestantism, strongly in support of the unlimited abortion license. They invoke Christian sensibilities of compassion for women in trouble, and employ with considerable effect the Christian language of freedom and personal responsibility, the latter understood as taking charge of one's own life. Among the weaknesses of these pro-choice coalitions is that they depend on the dispirited and declining constituencies of the liberal churches. Moreover, they are muted in invoking explicitly religious warrants for their position, since one of their chief accusations is that it is their opponents who are trying to "impose" their religiously grounded morality on others. Their fallback position is an appeal to tolerance, to agree to disagree. But to agree to disagree, of course, means that people should be able to do what they want with respect to abortion, with the unborn child having no voice in the decision. An irony in this dispute is that pro-life forces reject that appeal to tolerance as an instance of "repressive tolerance," much as Herbert Marcuse and others on the radicalized left used that phrase in their scorn of liberalism in the 1960s.

On the other side of the "Christian America" dynamic as it works its way through the abortion conflict are evangelical Protestants and Catholics who have the distinct advantage of having many more Christians, and more committed Christians, in their support. The "commitment variable" (as it is called in the jargon of social science) is important here. Research repeatedly confirms that, the more religiously committed people are—the more they go to church, the more they give, the more they rate religion as being "very important" in their lives—the more they are likely to be pro-life rather than pro-choice. Interestingly, the commitment variable holds also in the case of more liberal churches that are supportive of the pro-choice position. That is to say, the more committed members of these churches tend to disagree with the position of their church leaderships on abortion.

A further advantage of the pro-life forces is that, especially in the Catholic component of their coalition, they are armed with sophisticated arguments from natural law and public reason that require no explicit appeal to religious faith. In order to avoid engaging these arguments, pro-choice opponents contend that the rationality of Catholics is only a facade, that it is the appearance of rational argument in the service of a religious commitment. In taking this line, the opponents run the risk of appearing to be both antirational and anti-Catholic. In fact, the more strident pro-abortion advocates have over the years been overtly anti-Catholic, contending that resistance to what they view as progress is orchestrated by a monolithic Catholic Church, with evangelical Protestants and others being but pawns in a grand strategy to roll back the course of progress.

The connection, then, between the culture wars and what sociologists call "the religion factor" could hardly be more intense or complicated. On the most fevered question in cultural and political contention, that of abortion, we are witness to a playing out of the

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idea of Christian America, understood as the Judeo-Christian moral tradition having normative status in our public life. Few historians would dispute that this was the tradition—also in its Anglo-Scottish Enlightenment variations—by which this constitutional order was constituted. The great dispute is about whether it can be reconstituted on that basis, or whether that tradition is now irretrievably fragmented, or whether that tradition has in fact been replaced by a very different morality—perhaps along the lines of the "mystery passage" of the *Casey* abortion decision, which declared that our nation has no higher devotion than to the individual's right to construct his own meaning of the universe. This dispute will not be settled any time soon, and it is probably in the nature of such a dispute that it is never really settled at all. The raucous contention between conflicting (because incompatible) moral traditions may be a permanent feature of a democracy such as ours.

Conservatives are frequently heard to say that the country is on the edge of, or already engaged in, a massive religious revival, something like another Great Awakening. We should nurture a measure of skepticism about that. In his 1992 book *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation*, the celebrated critic Harold Bloom argued that "no Western nation is as religion-soaked as ours." According to Bloom, however, the religion in this instance is not Christianity but a sub-Christian Gnosticism in which the individual is thought to be endowed with a divine spark that is more primordial than creation itself. The sub-Christian religion that constitutes Bloom's post-Christian America is practiced in the name of Christianity but is far removed from any belief system that could sustain a normative moral tradition. The prophet of American Gnosticism, according to Bloom, is Ralph Waldo Emerson, and in this respect Bloom is very close to Richard Rorty's "American religion," without the latter's extravagant patriotism and sense of national destiny.

Bloom's depiction of American religion is intended to be provocative, but it should not be lightly dismissed. It poses a caution to conservatives who place their hopes in what is vaguely called a religious revival. There is religion and then there is religion. Recall the shelves upon shelves of New Age "spiritualities" to be found in the bookstores at the mall. Giving credence to Bloom's claim, such books are bought and read by people who think of themselves as Christians but are either unwilling or unable to recognize Gnostic doctrines quite at odds with elementary Christian teaching. In short, it is far from obvious that a revival of religiosity would reinvigorate the normative status of Judeo-Christian morality in a manner that might be decisive in resolving the conflicts of today's culture politics, and particularly the conflict over abortion policy. There is great uncertainty about whether the abortion conflict will ever be resolved at all, although a number of possibilities reward consideration.

The founding creed—"We hold these truths to be self-evident"—affirms truths that have been and are today far from self-evident to the great majority of humankind. The truth that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" is a truth that can only be explained as the product of a very particular history. In the eighteenth century, its explication and popular acceptance can only be explained in the context of the taken-for-granted reality of Christian America. This is not to say that the truths affirmed by the Declaration cannot be supported by rigorously secular arguments that are not dependent upon the biblical tradition. There have been many efforts to develop such arguments, from John Dewey's *A Common Faith* to, at a more academically rarefied level, John Rawls' 1971 work, *A Theory of Justice*. Whatever one may think of the intellectual persuasiveness of such efforts, they are familiar only to a relatively small number of intellectuals who are by no means agreed on their meaning or merits. They cannot secure a popular, which is to say democratic, adherence to the great claims of the Declaration and the constitutional order dependent upon those claims. This is not to say that it is not hypothetically possible to make a rigorously secular case for those claims that is democratically accessible and persuasive. But, in view of the many attempts that have failed, skepticism about that possibility is in order. And there is the inherent difficulty of what to do with the Creator—a reference that in the logic of the Declaration is essential to the claim that human rights are prior to government in the order of both time and authority.

Right from the beginning, the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness was of course denied to slaves of African descent. The founders did not deny it in principle, but came around to denying it in practice as the price to be paid for achieving the Union, which would turn out to be the undoing of the Union in a terrible civil war. History is not the automated playing out of inevitabilities. Had it not been for specific persons, actions, and circumstances—most particularly, had it not been for Abraham Lincoln—there might have been a peaceful secession of the South, or perhaps the nation might have lived with "the peculiar institution" of slavery for another century or more. And so it may also be the

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case that we might continue for a very long time with the unlimited abortion license imposed by *Roe v. Wade.*

Similarities and Dissimilarities

Despite the chilling similarity in logic and even in the language employed, however, there are significant differences between *Roe v. Wade* of 1973 and the *Dred Scott* decision of 1857. The former is in its time deemed by opinion-making elites to be in the cause of progress, while the latter was by the same elites of the nineteenth century condemned as the defense of an intolerable status quo. It is of the utmost importance that in the mid-1960s the liberal flag, signaling the cause of progress, was planted on the pro-abortion side of the divide. That, too, was not inevitable. American liberalism is historically schizophrenic. On the one hand, liberalism is devoted to ever expanding the community of common care and concern, as with the civil rights movement under Dr. King. On the other, it is the cause of the unlimited assertion of individual rights. In the abortion dispute, the second liberalism prevailed, powerfully reinforced as it was by an insurgent feminism defined as liberation from past constraints.

Then too, slavery was a public institution around which an entire economic and social order was constructed, whereas abortion can be construed as a private, even intimate, matter—a regrettable recourse to a quasi-medical solution of a problem that, while it may involve more than one person, is certainly not public business in the usual sense of the term. Most important, even those who had never seen a black slave acknowledged, with very few exceptions, that these were fellow human beings who were denied liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Even then, however, the abolitionists were, up until the Civil War, in a distinct minority. No matter how widespread the recognition of slavery as an evil—even a great evil that fundamentally contradicted the constituting truths of the nation—few were prepared to accept the conflict and massive dislocation required to abolish it. Pro-life activists who compare their cause to that of the nineteenth-century abolitionists can appeal to moral logic and historical symmetry, but the comparison does not engender hope for the prospect of abolishing abortion. Unless one envisions another Civil War. There are a handful of radically alienated Americans on the fringes who apparently do envision that. They are angry about many things, and some of them are also angry about the abortion license. They are, and must of moral necessity remain, a fringe phenomenon.

Most people have a remarkable capacity to live with cognitive dissonance. It is a burden that we become adept at bearing lightly. Yes, said the farmer and shopkeeper of 1857, slavery is grossly incompatible with the founding truths of the country, but it is the Fourth of July and the parade must go on. As mentioned earlier, public opinion on abortion has changed very little in the last quarter century. Somewhat less than 20 percent support the unlimited license now in force, about 20 percent say all abortion should be outlawed, and the remainder say abortion should not be permitted except in certain very limited circumstances. At the very end of the century, in 1999, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* reported that a survey of college freshmen showed that only 51 percent think abortion should be legal, indicating a decline of 14 percent from a few years ago.

At the same time, an abortion-rights organization indicated its distress at the finding of its own survey that an absolute majority (53 percent) of American women believe abortion should be outlawed entirely or allowed only in cases of rape, incest, and direct threat to the life of the mother. A finding of particular interest is that somewhat more than 50 percent of respondents agree that abortion "is the same thing as murder." Yet cognitive and moral dissonance continues to be conspicuous. The question is variously phrased in different surveys, but the noteworthy fact is that over half of those who say that abortion is tantamount to murder also say that abortion should be legal in difficult circumstances. One may wonder whether people really intend to say that murder should sometimes be legal.

Of course we do not have comparable survey research from the first part of the nineteenth century. From what we know, it seems likely that a strong majority of people in the North, and a substantial minority in the South, thought slavery was wrong, but also thought it was something they would have to live with, or at least did not see any tolerable way of getting rid of it. Compared with murder, slavery was certainly viewed as a lesser violation of moral right. Although today we tend to forget it, up until the late eighteenth century slavery in various forms was an almost universal institution. Educated people of undoubted moral seriousness vigorously debated the rights and wrongs of it. We today judge any word in defense of slavery to be abhorrent, but we should resist the hubris of presentism that despises those who lived before us, recognizing that we are as "culturally conditioned" in our views, and not always for the better, as were they. In any society that is deemed civilized, however, there has never been a comparable debate about the rights and wrongs of murder. The novelty of our circumstance is sobering. With respect to abortion, it would seem that a majority of Americans think we are debating the rights and wrongs of murder. The question is, When should the

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private use of lethal force in taking an innocent human life be legal? The question poses the oxymoron of legal murder. The moral, cultural, political, and legal implications of this should be of concern to everybody, and not only to those opposed to *Roe v. Wade* and its judicial progeny.

An argument made by the Supreme Court in *Casey* is that the abortion license is now so deeply ingrained as a taken-for-granted option that limiting it, never mind removing it, would result in intolerable social and political disruption. Further, the Justices claim, it would throw into question not only the "legitimacy" of the Court but of the rule of law. There are conservatives who, while supporting the Republican Party's declared opposition to abortion, basically agree with *Casey*. In this view, we have as a country passed the point of no return. The Republican anti-abortion plank, it is said sotto voce, is similar to the public position of leftist parties in Europe during the Cold War. Their public platforms committed them to state ownership of the means of production and alliance with the Soviet Union. That public position was necessary to hold on to their core leftist constituency, but it was perfectly well understood that they were not going to do anything to implement such commitments. Many in the core constituency also understood that, although they preferred not to admit it even to themselves. So it is, some say, with the Republicans and their "social conservative" constituency in the matter of abortion. Some call it cognitive dissonance; others, less kindly, speak of hypocrisy. More cynical still is the claim that some ostensibly pro-life politicians have no intention of effectively limiting the abortion license, since it would deprive them of such a useful issue in securing the loyalty of their core constituency.

Not Giving an Inch

It is very different with the partisans of *Roe* and *Casey*. After all these years, they are not complacent; they are determined not to give an inch. They are deadly serious in defending any and all abortions, including abortions that even some pro-choice advocates acknowledge are not abortions at all but instances of infanticide. Again we encounter irony in that the pro-choice side is burdened with a victory that it did not expect, and in some ways it did not want. Almost everybody was surprised by the *Roe v. Wade* decision of January 22, 1973. Planned Parenthood and its allies were pressing for "liberalized" abortion law, an expansion of those circumstances in which abortion would be legal. The Court responded by abolishing the abortion laws of all fifty states, thus removing with one edict any effective legal protection of unborn children. Defenders of *Roe* have said that the Court simply "speeded up" what was already happening in public opinion and politics. In fact, in the years immediately prior to *Roe*, public opinion as expressed in referendums and other initiatives was moving strongly against "liberalized" abortion law.

Certainly there can today be no dispute that *Roe*—unlike the 1954 *Brown* decision on school desegregation with which it is often compared—has not been democratically legitimated by the acceptance of the people. It is the single most unsettled and unsettling question in our public life. Being radically dependent upon the judiciary, pro-choice strategists feel compelled to adopt a position of no compromise, even if it means the defense of infanticide. If, as seems quite possible, the Supreme Court in a future decision effectively reverses its narrow 5-4 approval of "partial-birth abortion" that many states and Congress have tried to ban, pro-choice leaders fear that the entire abortion regime put in place by *Roe* will begin to unravel. That is a rational fear. What, then, is the alternative?

The leadership of the many organizations that make up the pro-life movement is agreed on the movement's goal: *every unborn child protected in law and welcomed in life*. With a few exceptions, it is agreed that that goal must be pursued over time and through incremental steps. In a world radically wounded by original sin, that goal will never be achieved completely. Children protected in law will not always be effectively protected by law. Some fathers will abandon their responsibility, and some mothers, whether in moral anguish or in contraceptive insouciance, will choose against their own children. There will always be some abortions. Before war came, Lincoln argued that the crucial decision was to turn in the direction of the eventual extermination of slavery, and so it is with abortion. In the language of John Paul II, language that has been embraced by the pro-life cause, it is a matter of deciding for "the culture of life" and against "the culture of death." Along the way, political accommodations and compromises will be made, but they are clearly along the way to the goal of "every unborn child protected in law and welcomed in life," which cannot be compromised.

The firm consensus of the movement is that the second part of the goal—"welcomed in life"—cannot be secured by politics or laws alone. Political debate and the enactment of laws have an important pedagogical role, but the goal finally requires a dramatic moral and cultural transformation. Against that happening is a media-driven popular culture that typically celebrates no higher value than the autonomous self. Against that happening are developments in reproductive technology, fetal

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screening, genetic engineering, cloning, and yet unknown practices that can more deeply entrench the treatment of the developing child as a thing at our disposal. Against that happening is the formidable ability of the pro-choice establishment to depict their opponents as the enemies of freedom—and the propensity of pro-lifers to inadvertently cooperate in that depiction.

Weighing the Advantages

Finally, however, the pro-life side has decided advantages. The pro-choice position depends upon government by the judiciary, and the judiciary, as it is said, also reads the election returns. The advocates of abortion rights are in a position of staking all on an extreme and much disputed reading of *Roe*, which, in turn, is widely viewed as an aberrant decision of an aberrant moment in American public life. Their pro-life opponents, on the other hand, urge a return to law and practice well established in the history of the nation before *Roe*. To excited cries about a regression to back alleys and clothes hangers, it is pointed out that current abortion technology will be readily available to outlaw abortionists, making post-*Roe* abortions as medically safe for the mother as they are today in abortion clinics that are, as is the case at present, almost entirely outside legal oversight.

An immeasurably more important advantage of the pro-life position, however, is its orientation to the future. The ideas of the future and of progress pervade the American experience. The pro-choice party is in the position of defending the status quo of the *Roe* regime. Pro-choice leaders are heard to complain that young people take the abortion license for granted; they do not remember a world in which it was not there. Could they be politically activated if they perceived that the license is threatened? Perhaps so. But pro-choice leaders have loudly declared for years that abortion rights are gravely threatened, and there has been no such activation. It is a distinct handicap that almost nobody wants to be described as pro-abortion, while many proudly, even defiantly, declare themselves anti-abortion. Today there are many thousands of young people intensely engaged in pro-life activism, also on college campuses. On most campuses they know they are going up against the status quo, a factor not unrelated to the attraction of youthful protest.

More significant still, the future orientation of the pro-life cause has a horizon that is, not to put too fine a point on it, eschatological. The vocabulary of "the culture of life" is redolent with prophetic promise, crucifixion, resurrection, and the coming Kingdom of God. In sharpest contrast, the pro-choice cause is defined by a time-specific conjunction of a judicial decision with the cultural convulsions emerging from the 1960s. Fashions change. Already there is a widespread reaction against an earlier feminism premised upon the actualization of the autonomous self. The promise that women could "have it all" has soured as more and more women recognize that the promise excluded what they want most—family, children, and love that is on friendly terms with obligation. Once again, motherhood is chic. Of course, reports about these cultural trends may be wrong. Nobody knows how deep or long-lasting they may be. But that is just the point. They come and go. The "liberalized" abortion campaign, *Roe v. Wade*, and the cause to which they gave definition have come, and now appear to be on their way to being gone. It will take a while to get rid of the judicial detritus of that era. Stare decisis, the standing of precedent, carries weight in the law but not in the gyrations of cultural change.

In the biblical view of things, the conflict between the culture of life and the culture of death will continue until the End Time. The historical scenario within which the pro-life movement understands itself is spacious. The pro-life movement of the last quarter century was laying the foundations for the pro-life movement of this century, and the century after this. The context is set by the words of St. Paul: "For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). What all Americans need to understand is that pro-life activists typically do believe that their children or their children's children will live in a world in which people will look back upon the abortion license with the same abhorrence with which we today look back upon slavery. They will, it is expected, shake their heads in horrified wonder at the fact that it was once legal and socially acceptable to kill children at will.

To be sure, the activists may be disappointed in that expectation. Perhaps the abortion regime now in place really is the infamous slippery slope, the precursor of widespread infanticide, euthanasia, eugenic engineering, and programs for the elimination of the "unfit," whether born or unborn, whether old or young. The proposal of such as Princeton's Peter Singer that we liberate ourselves from "traditional ethics" may prevail, at least for a time. But again, that is just the point of noting that the contention for the culture of life is set against an eschatological horizon. In principle—and in faith grounded in the cross and resurrection—nothing can falsify the hope that the culture of life will finally prevail. Any reversal is, in the larger scheme of things, but a momentary setback. As mentioned earlier, there

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are arguments for opposing abortion that are not religion-specific. Some Christians, especially Catholics, are adept at casting pro-life arguments in "secular" terms that they believe will have more purchase in the public square. There is also an organization called Humanists for Life, and I get occasional mailings from what I assume is a smaller group, Atheists for Life. But the abortion rights advocates are correct in portraying the pro-life cause as an undeniably religious movement. Its numbers, organizational base, and power to endure is in religion. Which is one way of saying that the pro-life movement is a democratic exercise in giving political effect to the deepest convictions of the political sovereign in this constitutional order, the American people.

This analysis, admittedly, assumes that America will continue to be a Christian, not a post-Christian, nation. It further assumes, with Irving Kristol and many other Jewish thinkers, that "Christian nation" is shorthand for saying that it is a nation in which the Judeo-Christian moral tradition is accorded normative status. As the immigrant Muslim community matures, it seems likely there will be Muslim Irving Kristols who will similarly affirm the shorthand of "Christian nation." To say that America is a Christian nation is like saying it's an English-speaking nation. There are not many people who speak the language well, but when they are speaking a language poorly, it is the English language they are speaking. There is, finally, no alternative to the English language, as there is no alternative to Christian America in a country where nearly 90 percent of the people think they are Christians. Goodness knows, alternative religions have been proposed by some intellectuals, but they have had few takers. Such alternatives purport to be universal, but they are universal in much the same way that Esperanto is a universal language. Like speakers of Esperanto, the adherents of these alternative religio-moral creeds are an elite sect, a cult without a culture.

Three Peoples

For different reasons, both those who are not Christians and Christians for whom Christianity is an ideal will continue to have problems with the reality of Christian America. It is an exceedingly problematic reality. But historically and at present, cultures are defined, above all, by cult, by the most binding truths to which people adhere or claim to adhere. In his fine study *Gregory the Great and His World*, R. A. Markus describes how the identity of a people had changed by the sixth century. "Traditionally, the human race was composed of three 'peoples' or 'kinds' (*genera*)," he writes:

> In the second and third centuries Christians were seen by their pagan contemporaries as the "third race." Jews, long familiar to them, were the second, while they themselves—Romans—were, naturally, the first. This schematization was turned on its head in the course of the Christianization of the Empire. From the Christian point of view, there were still three "religions," that of the Christians, of the Jews, and of the "pagans." This classification risked creating the illusion that "paganism" was a religion, like Christianity or Judaism; in fact it was simply the rest, those who were neither Christians nor Jews.

In America today, "the rest" are sometimes called the pagans. Or we may think about this in a different way. Survey research over the years indicates that India is the most religious society in the world. Every aspect of personal and public life is riddled through and through with religious rituals, symbols, and beliefs. The least religious, the most thoroughly secularized, society is Sweden. Sociologist Peter Berger has suggested, with an admitted touch of hyperbole, that, if we want to understand the cultural conflicts in our society, it is useful to think of America as a society of Indians ruled by an elite of Swedes. The Swedes believe, with some justice, that they control the commanding heights of the culture—the university, the prestige media, the major philanthropies, the world of arts and letters. The problem, which becomes ever more something like a crisis, is that the culture of the commanding heights has become a culture unto itself, disengaged from and increasingly in conflict with the culture of the American social reality.

As has been frequently noted in these pages, the problem began to be critical in America shortly after the Second World War when the courts and educational institutions set out to create the naked public square, meaning public life untouched by the moral and religious allegiance of most Americans. But the form of the problem is hardly that recent. Two centuries earlier, the revolutionaries in France attempted to replace Christianity with the Religion of Reason. In nineteenth-century England, Matthew Arnold proposed what we would call high culture as a substitute for traditional religion. And in this century we have witnessed the rise and the fall (after historically unprecedented suffering and death) of the ersatz religion of sundry political projects associated with Marxism. Compared with the French Revolution and Marxism, it should be noted, America's secular liberalism seems relatively benign.

These and other attempts to break the link between cult and culture—or to replace an existing cult with

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another—had in common a high confidence that they were the wave of the future. They were projects of modernity, and modernity was defined, above all, by the assumed demise of traditional religion. This was key to its mythology. For the enlightened elite of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and today, history is producing a nasty surprise. At the beginning of the third millennium, the great and building development is the desecularization of the world. The global significance of this is analyzed by Harvard's Samuel Huntington in *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.* As with any bold and comprehensive analysis, parts of that argument are glaringly vulnerable. (For instance, I believe he is wrong about Eastern Orthodoxy constituting a civilization separate from the Christian West.) But Huntington's thesis is unfairly, if understandably, attacked by those who have a deep stake, perhaps an ultimate stake, in the secularizing mythology of modernity.

Playing the Postmodernity Card

Then there is postmodernity, a term that covers a multitude of insights and sillinesses. Some religious thinkers are enamored of it because it "deconstructs" the scientistic and secularistic pretensions of Enlightenment rationalism. That is, I believe, a mistake. As John Paul II contends in his 1998 encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason), most of what is called postmodern thought reinforces various forms of "fideism"—the claim that things are true if you believe they're true—which is the death of reason and universal truth. Yet there is no doubt that the phenomenon of postmodernism has dealt an additional blow to the secularizing myth of modernity, and the blow is the more severe because it occurs at the heart of the culture of the commanding heights, namely, the university. More than any other institution, the university was the shrine of that culture. Its sacred task was the quest for the truth. And now its postmodernist hierophants giddily announce that "the truth" is a delusion—that they, like everybody else, have been making it up all along.

Humanity's propensity for utopianism being what it is, this century or the next may produce some new substitute religion—what T. S. Eliot called a "positive" replacement of Christian culture. A young Marx may be working at this moment on another world-transforming explanation of everything, and we may be in for another dizzying round of political ecstasy and human catastrophe. It seems improbable, but only God knows. Meanwhile, at the beginning of the century, we are faced with the challenge of coming to terms with the desecularization of the world and, closer to home, with the perduring, and perhaps reinvigorated, reality of Christian America. In the case of the latter, the quality of Christianity leaves much to be desired. Much of American Christianity is, as critics rightly point out, fideistic, privatized, and subjectivized—both incapable of and disinclined to make public arguments and exercise public influence. Christian America is, all in all, second-rate Christianity. But then, unless one holds to an implausibly romantic view of the earliest Church, the world has never seen anything but Christianity that is, all things considered, second-rate.

The problem with talk about Christian America, says an academic friend, is that it is not very Christian and it is not very American. He is certainly wrong at one level. Until fairly recently, most Americans talked about Christian America, and most Americans who talked about Christian America were Christians. At another level, one can employ words such as "Christian" and "American" qualitatively, and then argue until the cows come home about what is *truly* Christian and *truly* American. I don't mean to disparage such argument, for it is endlessly interesting and important, and we are in very deep trouble if we stop having such arguments. But here I speak of Christian America chiefly in a descriptive, and not a qualitative, manner. I am concerned about the thereness, the thus and so-ness, of the thing—and what it has meant in the past, and means today, and may mean in the century ahead.

My professor friend was, of course, taking a leaf from the great Edward Gibbon, who caustically remarked from the commanding heights of his day that the Holy Roman Empire was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire. A clever fellow, that Gibbon. And he is right that it was not holy in the sense that most of its rulers and people were not outstanding in the holiness of their lives. Almost by definition, the majority of people is never outstanding. It is also true that it was not effectively governed from Rome and most of its subjects were not Romans. As to whether it was an empire, that depends on whatever other regimes that have claimed that title one might compare it to. It was holy, however, in that it formally acknowledged as Lord the Holy One of Israel, and Christianity was the religion that most everybody failed to practice very well. And it was both Roman and an empire in that it more or less held together for a considerable time vast territories and numbers of people in a political order that understood itself to be in continuity with the Roman Empire and in spiritual solidarity with the See of Rome. In short, while it did not meet Mr. Gibbon's definitions of holy, Roman, and empire, it was the Holy Roman Empire.

And so it is, mutatis mutandis, with Christian America. Some people find talk about Christian

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America terribly threatening. Some thoughtful Christians find it terribly embarrassing. We can have endlessly interesting conversations about what a Christian society might look like, only to have our speculation rudely interrupted by the reminder that one of the largest and certainly the most influential of Christian societies looks like the United States of America at the beginning of the third millennium. Admittedly, it is not an entirely edifying sight. "Christian America" signifies a description under the judgment of an aspiration.

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WHAT WE LEARNED FROM *WILDER*

In *The Children of* Wilder (Pantheon), Nina Bernstein of the *New York Times* presents us with a terrible story beautifully told. It is the very personal story of Shirley Wilder, the named plaintiff in the notorious *Wilder v. Sugarman* lawsuit, her son, her grandson, and generations of the poor and chiefly black children who have been caught up in what is euphemistically called the "child care system" of New York City. Weaving in and out of that personal narrative is a tale of mainly misguided efforts to reform that system. Ms. Bernstein has assiduously researched the personal dimensions of her story, and provides a refreshingly candid account of the legal and public policy battles that centered in a curious understanding of the "separation of church and state" and the role of religion in public life. The late John Cardinal O'Connor once remarked to me, with perhaps a bit of hyperbole, "Everything that is wrongheaded in this country's thinking about religion and society is summed up in *Wilder v. Sugarman.*" Ms. Bernstein's book invites the conclusion that any hyperbole in that statement is readily forgivable. Although she finished writing before President Bush's proposal for "faith-based and community initiatives" in social services, her book could hardly be more pertinent to the debates generated by that proposal.

New York has a long history, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, of trying to cope with children who have, in Christopher Lasch's phrase, no haven in a heartless world. One answer was the "orphan trains" that carried many thousands of orphans and abandoned or abused street children to small towns and farms in the Midwest. For many, this meant escape from poverty and successful entrance into the world of American opportunity; for many others it was a form of indentured servitude in which they languished before drifting back into the urban underclass. Another, and dominant, answer was the construction of a child care system by Catholic and Jewish leaders who were determined to take care of their own. Both Catholics and Jews saw the orphan trains as yet one more device by which the Protestant establishment was trying to steal their children from what that establishment viewed as the vices of "popery" and "ghettoization." By the middle of the twentieth century, there was a large and flourishing network of Catholic and Jewish homes and schools for children in need of care. Working on a contractual basis with the city, this network was the backbone of child care in New York.

But there was not a comparable Protestant network, and Ms. Bernstein writes insightfully about why that was the case. A century and more ago, the then Protestant establishment understood itself to be the "Americanizing" party that had the mission of integrating the unwashed immigrant hordes of Catholics (mainly Irish Catholics) and Jews (mainly from Eastern Europe). In education, child care, and most everything else, it was assumed in those days that "public" meant Protestant. Across the board, Jews (especially Orthodox Jews) and Catholics struggled to maintain institutional control of their own communities. As Protestant meant public and public meant governmental, Protestant efforts were devoted to expanding city-run institutions and were directed against the religious "discrimination" inherent in the Catholic and Jewish efforts.

Over time, there were two major changes that set the stage for *Wilder v. Sugarman* in the 1970s (Jule Sugarman was then commissioner of social services). In city government, and especially in social services, Jews had largely displaced the older Protestant establishment. These were, however, thoroughly "Americanized" and secular Jews who were even more hostile than the earlier Protestants to the "discrimination" practiced by Catholics and the Orthodox. The second big change is that, by the latter part of the century, most of the children in need of care were black—and, with relatively few exceptions, Protestant. While Catholic and Jewish agencies cared for black children in numbers far out of proportion to the number of black Catholics or Jews, most of the black children were channeled into the less desirable city-run programs.

The Legacy of Leo Pfeffer

In 1973 *Wilder* began with, and for more than twenty years was pressed by, Marcia Lowry of the New York

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Civil Liberties Union. As Bernstein makes clear, Lowry and those who supported her came out of the world of what was then known as the Old Left, a world of passionate socialist idealism and militant secularism in which Jews were conspicuously prominent. In that world, religion and, more specifically, the connection between religion and political power was the enemy. The Catholic and Jewish agencies that played so large a part in the city's child care system were an obvious target. The line of attack in *Wilder* employed the "strict separationist" interpretation of the First Amendment then being advanced by Leo Pfeffer of the American Jewish Congress. At that time, the Supreme Court was sympathetic to the Pfefferian interpretation by which the city's payment for "sectarian" services in child care was an obvious violation of the "no establishment" provision of the religion clause.

The year 1973 was also in the afterglow of the high point of the civil rights movement, which made any hint of racial discrimination socially and legally anathema. In addition, Bernstein's account underscores the importance of the *Roe v. Wade* decision on abortion, which came down only months before *Wilder* was launched. The reader is struck by the passionate attachment to, bordering on obsession with, abortion and contraception in the way that the militant secularists pressed their attack. According to the Catholic agencies in particular, the proper response to sexual promiscuity and abuse was better supervision. For their opponents, the answer was contraception and abortion. *Wilder* was driven, then, by three powerful factors: a doctrine of "strict separationism" entrenched in the courts; the heightened potency of the charge of racial discrimination; and an ideological commitment to individual autonomy—especially the autonomy of women (including teenage girls)—represented by *Roe*.

Wilder began when John Lindsay was mayor and came to a whimpering settlement under Rudolph Giuliani. It took a large chunk of twenty-six years out of the lives of many capable people, and consumed millions of dollars in legal fees. Lawyers joked that it was like *Jarndyce and Jarndyce* in Dickens' *Bleak House*. "*Jarndyce and Jarndyce* drones on," Dickens wrote. "This scarecrow of a suit has, in the course of time, become so complicated, that no man alive knows what it means. . . . Fair wards of the court have faded into mothers and grandmothers; a long procession of chancellors has come in and gone out . . . but *Jarndyce and Jarndyce* still drags its dreary length before the court, perennially hopeless."

The hopelessness of *Wilder* became evident when Mayor Ed Koch made it clear that he had no stomach for testing the declared determination of Cardinal O'Connor to shut down the Catholic agencies, on which the city was increasingly dependent, rather than compromise Church teaching on abortion and contraception. (O'Connor promised that the Church would care for the children through some unspecified alternative system.) By the 1990s, other things had changed as well. The courts were drawing back from a dogmatic version of "the separation of church and state," giving way to accommodation and cooperation between government and the institutions of civil society, including religion. Further, the question of racial discrimination had been mooted by the fact that now almost all the children being cared for in the system were nonwhite.

Children Left Behind

This brief account cannot do justice to the complex and fascinating story told by Nina Bernstein in *The Children of* Wilder. She keeps our attention centered on what happened to the children, and that is sad and sometimes wrenching to read. Particularly in the government institutions there were shifting expert theories and fashions in the treatment of problem children, ranging from lobotomy, to electro-shock, to "aversive" therapy, the last including various forms of physical abuse and putting children into long periods of solitary confinement. In the book one encounters instances of wise and caring nuns in the Catholic institutions, but one is left with the impression that most of the people in charge of child care were kooky, cruel, or, most commonly, burned out and indifferent. One would like to think that there were more who were selflessly doing their best in almost impossible circumstances. Bernstein mentions, but might have paid more attention to, the damage done to the alternative of adoption by black ideologues who condemned interracial adoption as a form of "genocide," and by bureaucrats who used the foster care system as an instrument of income redistribution in racial politics.

As a result of *Wilder* and the agitations it generated, a marginally functioning child care system was almost pushed over the edge. Although Ms. Bernstein does not make a point of saying so, her book powerfully reinforces the truth that there is no adequate—not even anywhere near adequate—substitute for the stable two-parent family. President Bush's admirable slogan notwithstanding, however, some children will always be left behind. In New York and other urban centers, they are overwhelmingly black children, the victims of the collapse of an older order of marriage and family, including the extended family that once took in the children of irregular liaisons. Among the things to be learned from the misguided ideological campaign of *Wilder* is that any system of care that works

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for children will have to build on existing bonds, including religious bonds, of caring. That is the heart of "faith-based and community initiatives" proposed by the Administration. We have to wish the proposal well. The alternative, as we are reminded by *The Children of* Wilder, is a fourth and fifth generation of damaged lives further wrecked by government systems of child care disconnected from the institutional bearers of the communal dynamics of caring.

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THE IMPERATIVE AND PERIL OF ASSIMILATION

Philip Gleason, that distinguished Notre Dame historian, writes in *Logos* on "The Catholic Church in American Public Life." In short compass and admittedly broad strokes, he sketches the ways in which Catholicism creatively assimilated itself in American culture as a consequence of the crises of the two world wars of the twentieth century. Today almost everybody speaks favorably of "pluralism" and "diversity," but Gleason contends that "assimilation" is the more straightforward term, underscoring the imperative of engaging the culture while avoiding the peril of being dissolved into the culture. Catholicism successfully did that, he contends, until the multifaceted crisis commonly called "the sixties." He has words of sharp criticism for progressives, then called "*Commonweal* Catholics," who embraced the imperative while forgetting the peril. In addition to what the sixties meant for other Americans, for Catholics those years meant, above all, the Second Vatican Council. Gleason writes:

> On the one hand, the Vatican Council itself, and even more notably "the post-conciliar temper," completed the discrediting of "tridentine Catholicism" that the self-criticism of the 1950s had already begun. The Council shook everything loose. Deep splits among the Council fathers, sensationalized in the press as power struggles between progressives and conservatives, demystified the whole area of doctrine. Beliefs, practices, and institutions long regarded by ordinary Catholics as fundamental to their faith were now called into question, yea, openly derided by the most radical reformers. The Church, it was said, was "corrupt"; its leaders, bankrupt! Such charges were among the more extreme, to be sure. But even the most moderate observers agreed that the Council left American Catholics in a state of "confusion." And what was it they were confused about? Nothing less than their identity as Catholics—their sense of who they were, what they believed, and how those beliefs should shape their lives.

So where does that leave Catholicism now? Gleason writes:

> Assimilation became a more serious problem for American Catholics over the course of the twentieth century. To call it a problem does not mean assimilation is a bad thing in itself. Recall the "assimilation problematic" referred to at the outset; assimilation is necessary if a group is to avoid self-isolation, but unqualified assimilation entails the group's extinction. While I do not anticipate extinction, it seems to me quite clear that the problem has gotten to be a lot bigger. In the era of World War I, Catholics experienced a striking degree of assimilation, but they also forged a new ideological and institutional basis for Catholic identity. That balance was not maintained at midcentury, when accelerating assimilation found no matching deployment of new internal resources. In the sixties, the old ideological and institutional structures collapsed, and nothing comparable was at hand to replace them. That gave rise to a Catholic identity crisis, which has since modulated into a continuing identity problem.

Gleason concludes by asserting the urgency of strengthening Catholic identity by rehabilitating distinctively Catholic institutions. He does not specifically mention Catholic colleges and universities or the ongoing debate over proposals set forth in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, but one may fairly assume that is not far from his mind. What is so routinely praised as "pluralism," he says, is too often "simply assimilationism sailing under false colors, and for that reason an all the more insidious danger."

A More Hopeful Note?

Gleason's is a sober and sobering narrative of "the Catholic Church in American public life," and I have no substantive disagreement with the way he tells the story. At the same time, I think there is reason to hope that his moral is gaining wider acceptance today than his article suggests. A few items chosen at random: the fact that the dominant express concern in Catholic higher education today is "Catholic identity," not the

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disengagement from Catholicism espoused by the 1968 "Land O' Lakes" manifesto. Another: bold statements such as that by Peter Steinfels, former editor of *Commonweal*, on the seventy-fifth anniversary of that magazine, detailing the catastrophe of the Catholic liberalism that joined its fortunes to sundry, and usually mindless, leftisms. Another: the launching and growth of vigorously Catholic magazines in the last two decades. Another: the dramatic upsurge of adult converts, including notable academics and cultural leaders. Another: the initiation of new centers of liturgical studies and pastoral formation aimed at remedying the "destabilization" of the sacramental order that was such a marked feature of recent decades. And Gleason does not even mention the inestimable impact of the pontificate of John Paul II, especially among young people, including younger priests, who are excited by the high adventure of Catholic faith and life, and for whom the seductions of being "just like everybody else" hold no appeal at all.

Maybe it's because I hang out with the right crowd, but the Catholics I know best, especially the younger Catholics, are less interested in being "American Catholics"—meaning that they are Catholics in a distinctively American way—than in being "Catholic Americans"—meaning that they are Americans in a distinctively Catholic way. The adjective is decisive. In sum, I agree with Gleason's narrative and diagnosis, and there are many who still need to be persuaded of the truth he sees so clearly, but I would end such a historical survey on a more hopeful note. Today, it seems to me, the energy, the commitment, the sense of venture and possibility are mostly on the side of his concluding prescription—strengthening a distinctively Catholic identity. I should only add that of course I may be wrong about that.

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CAUGHT OUT AND CATCHING UP

Everybody knows by now Irving Kristol's definition of a neoconservative: a liberal who has been mugged by reality. Actually, the term "neoconservative" is not much used now, and I use it almost never. But in some circles the neoconservatives are still a lively topic of conversation, as witness William Dean of Iliff School of Theology, Denver, writing in a symposium in *Religion and American Culture.* He takes his liberal academic colleagues to task for letting the neoconservatives—meaning mainly the usual suspects, Michael Novak, George Weigel, and your writer—monopolize the field of public theology. Public theology in this context means theology that has something to say about the res publica.

"The neoconservatives overtook the academic public intellectuals for three reasons," Dean writes. "First, because the neoconservatives were shaken to their foundations, they were forced to rethink their positions, while the academics were unshaken; second, the neoconservatives remained classical, small 'r' republicans, and the academics did not; third, the neoconservatives developed a basic cultural, sometimes even theological, interpretation of America, and the academics did not." The liberal and mostly Protestant academics, Dean observes, smugly continued on in the tradition of Walter Rauschenbusch, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Paul Tillich, failing to appreciate that these figures in their lifetimes underwent a shaking of the foundations comparable to today's neoconservatives.

From the late 1960s on, he writes, "this small band of intellectuals grew strong enough to provide much of the intellectual ballast for the Reagan Administration," to found journals of influence such as *Public Interest* and FIRST THINGS, and, in general, to dominate the discussion of religion, ethics, and public life. "As they moved from the far left to the right wing of the left and then to the antiliberal wing of the right, they endured the outrage of liberal intellectuals who had once been their friends and colleagues." Dean clearly includes himself among those liberal intellectuals, but he has some pointed advice for his friends: "The academic public theologians need to develop a distinct theological interpretation of America, one that gives context and impetus to their particular and often admirable political, economic, gender, racial, and ecological arguments. But to do this, they must get within mugging range of reality."

There are several things that might be said about this, apart from the fact that those of us who are called neoconservatives are, contra Dean, the champions of the liberal tradition. First, William Dean considerably overestimates our influence. Second, the arguments of his liberal friends are, in substance and temperament, generally hostile to the American experiment, both past and present. People will not buy their self-understanding from those who are perceived to be, and often declare themselves to be, their enemies. Third, the liberal academics he has in mind are, with exceptions, Protestant, as is the tradition of Rauschenbusch, Niebuhr, and Tillich to which they adhere. The leading "neocons," on the other hand, are Catholic, determined to advance the vision of John Paul II, and energetic in embracing the best in the Protestant tradition

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of public theology, notably the work of Reinhold Niebuhr. Moreover, they are assiduous in cultivating a close relationship with evangelical Protestants, who are anathema to most of Dean's oldline liberal academics, not least because evangelicals are favorably disposed toward a theological interpretation of America. (In the same symposium, Mark Noll of Wheaton College suggests, with some justice, that the most influential public theology today is being advanced by evangelicals.) Conclusion: Dean and his friends do need to get "within mugging range of reality," and his essay is a sign that this may be happening. But, once sufficiently mugged, it is not evident that they have an alternative vision to propose. But then, who could have predicted that, to cite but one example, the author of the 1969 *Theology of Radical Politics* (Michael Novak) would have so much to contribute?

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WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ She smoked cigars, had seven children, did the definitive translation of Wittengenstein's major work, succeeded to his chair at Cambridge, publicly protested Truman's use of atomic bombs, was arrested as a pro-life activist, possessed one of the great philosophical minds of the century, and was an upfront Christian. How I wish I had known her personally. The tributes to G. E. M. (Elizabeth) Anscombe (including John M. Dolan's in these pages [May]) have me going back to read her works. Christopher Howse in the *London Daily Telegraph* observes: "Elizabeth Anscombe was no fundamentalist, but nor did she use philosophy to explain away the creed in which she believed. To an essay on the Eucharist, republished in the third volume of her collected philosophical papers (1981), she gave the title 'On Transubstantiation,' even though the term *substance* was not one that her contemporaries or mentors used in their cosmology. The essay begins with the problem of explaining to a child the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament. 'When one says "transubstantiation," one is saying exactly what one teaches the child in teaching it that Christ's words, by the divine power given to the priest who uses them in his place, have changed the bread so that it isn't there any more (nor the stuff of which it is made), but instead there is the body of Christ. I knew a child,' she continues, 'close upon three years old and only then beginning to talk, but taught as I have described, who was in the free space at the back of the church when the mother went to communion. "Is he in you?" the child asked when the mother came back. "Yes," she said, and to her amazement the child prostrated itself before her. I can testify to this, for I saw it happen. I once told the story to one of those theologians who unhappily (as it seems) strive to alter and water down our faith, and he deplored it.' The story no doubt shocked, even if that paper was delivered to a Catholic audience. And, of course, Elizabeth Anscombe knew, as she went on to mention, that Christ is not present 'dimensively' (nor does transubstantiation imply that he is). She was only exemplifying what Dr. Johnson noted: 'Sir, there is no idolatry in the Mass. They believe God to be there and they adore him.' And now Elizabeth Anscombe has moved from the shadows and metaphors of philosophy into Reality, *ex umbris et imaginibus in veritatem* [out of shadows and images into the truth]."

■ There are two forms of nationalism in Russia, writes Geraldine Fagan, the Moscow correspondent of the Oxford-based Keston Institute. The one is Stalinist and the other prerevolutionary, with most nationalists being in the first camp. They couldn't care less about religion, but they are hostile to the Catholic Church "since there is a general perception that it belongs to an organized anti-Russian force, and all Russians were taught in school that Catholics were crusaders from the Baltics repelled by the national hero Alexander Nevsky." The pleading of John Paul II that the Church needs to breathe again with both lungs, East and West, simply makes no sense to the Orthodox, says Fagan. "Practicing Orthodox in favor of ecumenical dialogue are indeed very few. In the Soviet era the pro-ecumenical element within the Church gained an artificial influence because of its usefulness to the foreign policy aims of the regime, and precisely for that reason is now frequently viewed with derision by post-revival practicing believers. For most Orthodox, ecumenical dialogue with Catholics (and others) is impossible for a simple reason—they are heretics. To Russian Orthodox, however, this does not necessarily conjure up emotive images of burnings at the stake: one parishioner matter-of-factly explained to me that the word 'heresy' merely derives from the Greek for 'opinion'; that is, anything deviating from Orthodox tradition is the product of the mistaken human notion that this tradition could be improved upon." The Moscow Patriarchate has been implacable in opposing the Pope's initiatives for Christian unity, and Fagan suggests that John Paul II's visit to predominantly Orthodox Ukraine, despite the protests of Moscow, is clear evidence that Rome is no longer willing to let Moscow exercise veto power in the

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ecumenical quest. She writes, "It looks as if Catholic-Russian Orthodox relations might be about to become stormier, if also more open." That seems about right. Time presses as this pontificate goes into its final innings, and John Paul is eager to reach out to whoever is willing to respond in advancing the vision of the encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (That They May Be One). Some Orthodox churches have responded, with the result that ecumenism becomes more an argument within Orthodoxy, rather than, as the Moscow Patriarchate would have it, an argument between Orthodoxy and Rome.

■ You have probably read that "studies have demonstrated" that it makes no difference whether children are reared by a mother and father, two fathers, or two mothers. The claim is a staple of advocacy for same-sex unions. The problem with the claim is that it isn't true, according to two social scientists, Robert Lerner and Althea Nagai, who examine forty-nine studies of same-sex parenting in a 148-page book, *No Basis: What the Studies* Don't *Tell Us About Same-Sex Parenting*. The book is available for $7 from the Ethics and Public Policy Center (1015 15th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005) or can be downloaded from www.eppc.org.

■ Daniel McGroarty has a way with telling the moving stories of people, and not only poor people, who have benefited from educational choice. The 156-page book, *Trinnietta Gets a Chance: Six Families and Their School Choice Experience*, is published by the Heritage Foundation, and I expect they'll send you a copy if you write them at 214 Massachusetts Avenue, NE, Washington, D.C. 20002.

■ Last summer in Waco, Texas, there was a civil trial in which survivors and relatives of those killed in the 1993 debacle brought a wrongful death lawsuit against the federal government. The facts about the tragedy in Waco—see Dean Kelley's "Waco: A Massacre and Its Aftermath," FT, May 1995—have quickly, too quickly, faded from the public mind. Writing in *Religion in the News*, Stuart A. Wright, a sociologist who has studied the circumstances leading up to the death of the Branch Davidians, details what appears to be the extreme prejudice in favor of the government exhibited by Judge Walter Smith who presided at last summer's trial. The verdict, almost predictably, went against the survivors and relatives, and is now on appeal. Wright concludes: "Perhaps the only thing more disconcerting than the ignored subtext of Judge Smith's thinly veiled scorn toward the plaintiffs was the lack of coverage of the trial by the major national news outlets. Outside of Texas, the mainstream media decided that the country didn't want to revisit the painful memory of Waco. In tandem with Special Counsel [John] Danforth, they determined that this unfortunate episode should be put behind us—and permitted a biased judge to sweep legitimate grievances under the rug. As a result, the country in all likelihood missed its last opportunity to correct an agonizing injustice and heal a national wound."

■ This year is the bicentenary of the birth of John Henry Cardinal Newman. John Paul II has written a letter on the occasion, in which he says: "Newman was born in troubled times which knew not only political and military upheaval but also turbulence of soul. Old certitudes were shaken, and believers were faced with the threat of rationalism on the one hand and fideism on the other. Rationalism brought with it a rejection of both authority and transcendence, while fideism turned from the challenges of history and the tasks of this world to a distorted dependence upon authority and the supernatural. In such a world, Newman came eventually to a remarkable synthesis of faith and reason which were for him 'like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of the truth' (*Fides et Ratio*). It was the passionate contemplation of truth which also led him to a liberating acceptance of the authority which has its roots in Christ, and to the sense of the supernatural which opens the human mind and heart to the full range of possibilities revealed in Christ. 'Lead kindly light, amid the encircling gloom, lead Thou me on,' Newman wrote in *The Pillar of the Cloud*; and for him Christ was the light at the heart of every kind of darkness. For his tomb he chose the inscription: *Ex umbris et imaginibus in veritatem*; and it was clear at the end of his life's journey that Christ was the truth he had found." The Pope adds that he hopes the time is near when the Church, having already declared Newman "venerable," will "publicly proclaim the exemplary holiness of one of the most distinguished and versatile champions of English spirituality."

■ Talk about a clergy shortage, among both Protestants and Catholics, is badly skewed, reports Mark Chaves, a sociologist at the University of Arizona. Half of all churchgoers in the U.S. are in the largest 10 percent of congregations, which number four hundred or more members. It is the small congregations that tend to be without full-time clergy leadership. Catholic parishes are usually larger, which means that, while 18 percent of Protestants in the country have no full-time leadership, that is true of only 6 percent of Catholics. These and other data were offered at a forum on theological schools and congregational leadership in Indianapolis last January.

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■ I sometimes think that half our readers are editors, former editors, or would-be editors. Every issue elicits challenges to a word, trope, or grammatical form that met with disapproval. Way back in the fourth grade, a persnickety Ms. Woodward spoiled the subject of grammar for me, and I have ever since "written for the ear," meaning that it's right if it sounds right. In recent years, however, I've had second thoughts, wondering whether I have not given aid and comfort, however inadvertently, to the "descriptivists," who, against the "prescriptivists," contend that there are no rules at all. Mark Halpern, writing in the Winter 2000 issue of *American Scholar*, has a helpful word on the subject: "In order to preserve their delusions on this point, would-be linguistic liberators have to fantasize that we are beleaguered by schoolmarms threatening to crack our knuckles with a hickory stick if we split an infinitive, use a double negative, or commit any of the other solecisms that nineteenth-century teachers were so alert for, and that, no doubt, a few twenty-first-century ones still are. It is also necessary to cherish the illusion that there are many potentially great writers who have been crushed and silenced by the strictures of these pedants, and that we have been deprived of many a masterpiece by such oppression. The best short retort to these fevered imaginings is that of Flannery O'Connor: 'Everywhere I go I'm asked if the university stifles writers. My opinion is that they don't stifle enough of them. There's many a bestseller that could have been prevented by a good teacher.'" No telling what a good teacher might have done for my writing career.

■ "Freedom From Religion" is a long article in the *Nation* by Ellen Willis of New York University in which she deplores the revival of religion in public that has been going on for some years and is embraced by "the accidental President," George W. Bush. She leaves no doubt that she favors a thoroughly secular state in a thoroughly secular society, but breaks with many on the left by acknowledging that this "is not mandated by the First Amendment. It's a matter of sensibility, not law." She further acknowledges that the left is in trouble because many of its natural allies in the religious communities have been swayed by, inter alia, what they perceive as the justice of protecting unborn life. Old-fashioned religious reactionaries and fundamentalists have always been with us, she says, but what she calls the "pro-church" movement has now made such political headway because it has been able to translate its message "into a less parochial language." According to Willis, "Two Christian intellectuals have been key figures in developing that language"—Stephen Carter of Yale and your scribe. "Richard John Neuhaus, now editor of the 'theocon' journal FIRST THINGS, wrote what might be considered the pro-church movement's canonical work, *The Naked Public Square*, which appeared in 1984." Against the secularist left, Carter and Neuhaus have succeeded in redefining the public question. "Together they have changed the debate by challenging secularism on its own moral ground, as the defender of democratic values." For Willis, the conflict is very largely about sex, and the choice is stark: "Conservative sexual morality and antifeminism are rooted in premodern, patriarchal religious ideology, while the logic of secular morality supports gender equality and a view of sexual fulfillment as a human right." Parental choice in education, faith-based social initiatives, and "the right's sexual-political agenda" do not violate the no-establishment provision of the First Amendment, she admits, but they do "undermine the spirit of secular democracy." Ellen Willis is right to worry that the left is increasingly perceived as antidemocratic, and conservatives as the champions of democratic self-governance. When religion is so closely associated with morality, she laments, the secularist left is viewed as immoral. Her conclusion: "This is what we're facing now—not only from Bush and the Christian right, but from the earnest centrists and liberals who are doing their dirty work." Although Willis no doubt exaggerates the role of a couple of scribblers, the terms of the debate have been changed, and the frustration of the secularist left is entirely understandable.

■ David Packard and William Hewlett, cofounders of Hewlett-Packard, were conservatives, of a sort. The kind of conservatives who want to reduce the number of poor people not by eliminating poverty but by eliminating poor people. Both left billions to their family foundations, which handsomely fund the programs of Planned Parenthood and others in promoting abortion among the world's poor. Some pro-life leaders have called for a boycott of Hewlett-Packard products. The standard objection to boycotts is that companies will always find customers elsewhere, but boycotts can, as they say, send a message—especially if you, in fact, send a message to the company explaining why you won't patronize it.

■ In "L'Chaim and Its Limits: Why Not Immortality?" (May) Leon Kass makes a convincing case that we should not want to extend our natural life span by another twenty, never mind one hundred, years. In that connection, an article in *Scientific American* explains why human beings were not "built to last." "The living machines we call our bodies deteriorate because they were not designed for extended operation and because we now push them to function long past their warranty period. The human body is

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artistically beautiful and worthy of all the wonder and amazement it invokes. But from an engineer's perspective, it is a complex network of bones, muscles, tendons, valves, and joints that are directly analogous to the fallible pulleys, pumps, levers, and hinges in machines. As we plunge further into our postreproductive years, our joints and other anatomical features that serve us well or cause no problems at younger ages reveal their imperfections. They wear out or otherwise contribute to the health problems that become common in the later years." The authors conclude, however, by noting that progress in the biomedical sciences is changing that picture. "These profound advances will eventually help compensate for many of the design flaws contained within us all." The repeated references to design might lead one to believe that the authors belong to the "intelligent design" school of thought, even if they think the designer is not as intelligent as we are.

■ Disraeli said this: "In a progressive country change is constant; and the great question is not whether you should resist change which is inevitable but whether that change should be carried out in deference to the manners, the customs, the laws, the traditions of the people, or in deference to abstract principles and arbitrary and general doctrines." The ever thoughtful John O'Sullivan quotes that in defense of his friend John Gray, professor of European thought at the London School of Economics, who is now being hailed in some liberal circles as a defector from the conservative cause. Gray is still very much a conservative, says O'Sullivan. He is not wrong to see that globalization—along the simplistic lines of a universal imposition of American-style capitalism touted, for instance, by Thomas Friedman in *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*—can pose a serious threat to tradition and community. Where Gray is unrealistic, according to O'Sullivan, is in thinking that global regulation by institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO can provide protection against what he fears. "John Gray's attempt to protect these things against the inevitable challenges of economic and technical change would merely succeed in handing control of our lives to the international bureaucrats who are the latest incarnation of 'abstract principles and arbitrary and general doctrines.'" So many of life's questions come down to the question of who will do what most sensible people recognize must be done. The cultural ravages of globalization need to be checked, but the question—as in who will guard the guardians?—is who will regulate the regulators? O'Sullivan suggests that the best we can hope for is that different forms of capitalism—American, Asian, British, German, etc.—will vie with one another in proposing the right mix of economic efficiency and cultural tradition. It is a formula for muddling through, which, it may be objected, is not a formula at all. Muddling through is very unsatisfactory, but then, so is everything else short of the promised End Time.

■ "Everything is political." That is a deeply wrongheaded maxim. But it is making headway also in the worlds of humanitarian aid, writes Fiona Fox of Cafod, a Catholic aid and development agency, in the *Tablet*. She cites the example of Henri Dunant, a nineteenth-century humanitarian who inspired the formation of efforts such as the Red Cross, and challenges those who today attack a policy of "neutrality" on the part of organizations providing humanitarian aid. "The principle of neutrality in particular—the refusal to speak out against any side in a conflict as a means of guaranteeing access to the victims—has become the subject of an acrimonious debate," she writes. Whether in Bosnia, Rwanda, or East Timor, it is said that aid organizations should withhold assistance to the "wrong" side. "To be neutral is to be on the side of the criminal," declared a speaker at a recent meeting organized by the International Red Cross. "There are moments in history when crimes are being committed, when neutrality is not neutral at all but complicity in the crime. I think the time has come for aid workers to challenge the commandment of neutrality—to draw a line and be counted." Fiona Fox strongly disagrees: "Using humanitarian aid to achieve wider political goals is a dangerous route. Instead of giving in to the moral pressure to become new humanitarians, it might be more courageous to decide instead to breathe new life into old principles. Agencies could ask politicians to stick to politics, leave Amnesty International and others to promote human rights, and themselves concentrate on reviving the spirit that compelled the young Henri Dunant to go to the aid of wounded soldiers on the battlefields of Solferino in 1859. The men were lying in the mud in agony, without access to water, food, or medical aid. Dunant did not judge the soldiers who lay dying in his arms, and he took no view of the rights or wrongs of their war. And yet he inspired an amazing humanitarian tradition that has endured for more than a century. We should certainly pause a while before we consign it to history." I believe she is right. There are enough people in the world eager to take partisan positions. There will always be a shortage of people who reach out to help the victims, whether they are one side or the other—or, as is most often the case, on neither.

■ Coming soon from Germany! *Koerperwelten*! The word means body works, and refers to an exhibition in

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Berlin in which mummified corpses are used as works of art. The "artist" is Gunter von Hagen, an anatomy professor, and he preserves human tissue by replacing body fluids with synthetic resin. The corpses look like anatomical models with muscles, organs, the nervous system, and blood vessels clearly visible. There is a sectioned body of a pregnant woman with her unborn child. The exhibits are of people who gave their consent before dying. It is reported that museums in London and New York have expressed an interest in hosting *Koerperwelten*. One recalls reports a few years ago that Germans were no longer placing obituary notices in newspapers. Funerals were also in decline. People wanted simply to depart with no public notice taken. Between nothing and exhibitionism there used to be something called civilization.

■ Peter Singer of Princeton is back, this time with an essay on bestiality. "One by one, the taboos have fallen," he writes, but people still have this hang-up about doing it with animals. Singer's view seems to be that there is nothing wrong in having sex with animals, so long as no cruelty is involved. For instance, some men do it with chickens, sometimes killing the chicken in the process. Singer disapproves of that, although he notes that "it is no worse than what egg producers do to their hens all the time." His chief complaint is against "the Judeo-Christian tradition" that imagines there is "a wide, unbridgeable gulf" separating us from animals. He goes on to cite many examples of this mistaken view. He might have, but does not, cite the fact that only human beings get appointed to tenured chairs of ethics at Ivy League universities. Given his argument, that would seem to be profoundly unfair. I have no doubt that in such a position my dog Sammy would perpetrate less intellectual and moral confusion than some who are unjustly privileged by virtue of the speciesism that is rampant in our institutions of higher learning. The fact that we too are animals, Singer concludes, "does not make sex across the species barrier normal or natural, whatever those much misused words may mean, but it does imply that it ceases to be an offense to our status and dignity as human beings." The fact that Peter Singer promotes such views does not necessarily make him lunatic or perverse, whatever those much misused words may mean, but it does not do much for his status and dignity as a professor of ethics, nor for that of the university that honors him.

■ There is an abundance of speculation, but nobody seems to know why FBI agent Robert Hanssen, a devout Catholic, spied for the Soviet Union, and later for Russia, for fifteen years, if indeed he is guilty as charged. There is this, however, from the *Tablet*: "Hanssen's wife, Bonnie, a Catholic schoolteacher, is reported to have had no indication of her husband's double life. He was, it seems, utterly dedicated and loyal. Perhaps that is why in turning traitor he was able to switch from one extreme to the other." It's hard to figure these extremists who are dedicated and loyal.

■ Now the pieces of the Hanssen mystery have been put together by Pacific News Service, based in San Francisco. Reporter Yoichi Clark Shimatsu, who has also reported on the Aum Shinrikyo sect in Japan, notes that Hanssen is a member of Opus Dei, "a secretive lay group within the body of the Catholic Church" that provided "crucial support" for the election of John Paul II as Pope, in return for which he instructed Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Agostino Casaroli to use Opus Dei as the instrument of the Vatican foreign service in order to induce the Soviet Union to dismantle its empire in return for U.S. intelligence secrets passed on by Robert Hanssen, in return for which the Pope would . . . oh, forget it.

■ Excommunication is a matter of the Church's determination that a person has excommunicated himself. This comes up again in the response of Patriarch Alexis II of Moscow to demands that the Church revoke the excommunication of Leo Tolstoy more than a hundred years ago. "We do not have the right," said the Patriarch, "to force a person who died a hundred years ago to return to the Church he rejected." Rome has made a similar response to suggestions that the excommunication of, for example, Martin Luther be revoked. Presumably both cases have already been disposed of by higher authority.

■ Arthur Koestler will be remembered by history for his 1940 antitotalitarian masterpiece, *Darkness at Noon*. Right now he is being remembered as the misogynist, abusive, self-hating Jew depicted in David Cesarani's recent *Arthur Koestler: The Homeless Mind*. Neil McInnes goes after Cesarani in the *National Interest* on many scores, but especially for his blaming Koestler for the Holocaust deniers and anti-Israeli propagandists who exploit his 1976 book *The Thirteenth Tribe: The Khazar Empire and its Heritage*. In that book Koestler contended that in the ninth century in Central Asia, the Khazars, given the choice of becoming Christian and therefore clients of Byzantium or Muslim and therefore subject to the Caliphate, converted to Judaism in order to maintain their independence. According to this theory, the Jews of Poland and other parts of Central and Eastern Europe were Khazar converts and had no historical link to—or claim to?—Palestine. McInnes notes that, while Koestler went well beyond what the evidence supports, his thesis was hardly new. Ernest

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Renan made much the same case in the nineteenth century. McInnes writes: "Renan maintained that the mass conversions to Judaism in Greek and Roman times had already deprived Judaism of any ethnographic meaning, i.e., had severed the physical (but not the spiritual) links with Palestine. Just as the Prophets had predicted, Judaism became a universal religion: '*Tout le monde y entrait.*' Most of the Jews of Gaul and Italy, Renan said, came from these conversions. As for the Jews of the Danube basin and southern Russia, Renan was already pointing at the Khazars. 'These regions contain great masses of Jewish populations who probably have little or nothing ethnographicallly Jewish about them.' Later, Max Weber in *Ancient Judaism* gave the reason for the mass conversions of Hellenist and Roman times, 'the great epoch of Jewish proselytism,' namely that, regardless of race or nationality, 'Jewry attracted people who found their religious satisfaction in the purity of the ethic and the power of the conception of God.' These were the facts that, still later, it became urgent to recall in order to counter the absurd Nazi theory of the Jewish 'race.'" Remember Arthur Koestler for *Darkness at Noon.* Read it and I am almost certain that you will remember, and be grateful for, its author.

■ I am a little late in noting the retirement of Edward Cardinal Cassidy as president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. Cardinal Cassidy returns to his home country of Australia after serving thirty-eight years all over the world in the Vatican's diplomatic service and eleven years in the above positions. He has been an invaluable help to our Institute, speaking at our events, contributing to this journal, and helping out in numerous ways with the officially encouraged but deliberately unofficial project of "Evangelicals and Catholics Together." Working with him has always been an edifying pleasure, and I look forward to the same helpful cooperation with his successor, Walter Cardinal Kasper. In a March interview, Cardinal Cassidy cited as highlights of his work with other Christians and with Jews the Pope's Jubilee Year visit to the Holy Land and completing with Lutherans the joint declaration on justification. His last months at the Pontifical Council were somewhat vexed by the statement from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dominus Iesus* (Jesus the Lord). He was publicly critical of aspects of the statement, which did not sit well with those at the Congregation who point out that Cardinal Cassidy had signed off on the statement and is, therefore, one of its authors. In the March interview, Cardinal Cassidy noted the initially negative response to the statement and observed that, when a document gives rise to so much confusion and disappointment, the authors must ask themselves how much of the fault is their own and how they might have explained things better. Fair enough. No matter its source or level of authority, no such document is above improvement. At the same time, one notes with satisfaction that, after the initial criticisms and after people have had a chance to study the document itself, there is something of an ecumenical consensus building that *Dominus Iesus* is a salutary and bracing clarification that keeps ecumenical dialogue unmistakably engaged with the fullness of the truth taught by the Catholic Church. I count it a signal grace of my life to know Cardinal Cassidy as a friend and pray him, in what will undoubtedly be a very active retirement, *ad multos annos.*

■ What's wrong with the public school system will not, I think, be fixed by adding a prayer to the school routine, but it is important to understand why such a strong and steady majority of Americans want such prayers. How the present circumstance looks to many young people is caught in the following doggerel, submitted by a vigilant reader who says it was written by a teenager in Baghdad, Arizona.

SCHOOL PRAYER

Now I sit me down in school
Where praying is against the rule
For this great nation under God
Finds mention of Him very odd.

If Scripture now the class recites,
It violates the Bill of Rights.
And anytime my head I bow
Becomes a Federal matter now.

Our hair can be purple, orange, or green,
That's no offense; it's a freedom scene.
The law is specific, the law is precise.
Prayers spoken aloud are a serious vice.

For praying in a public hall
Might offend someone with no faith at all.
In silence alone we must meditate,
God's name is prohibited by the state.

We're allowed to cuss and dress like freaks,
And pierce our noses, tongues, and cheeks.
They've outlawed guns, but FIRST the Bible.
To quote the Good Book makes me liable.

We can elect a pregnant Senior Queen,
And the "unwed daddy," our Senior King.

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It's "inappropriate" to teach right from wrong,
We're taught that such "judgments" do not belong.

We can get our condoms and birth controls,
Study witchcraft, vampires, and totem poles.
But the Ten Commandments are not allowed,
No word of God must reach this crowd.

It's scary here I must confess,
When chaos reigns the school's a mess.
So, Lord, this silent plea I make:
Should I be shot, my soul please take!

■ Many years ago, sociologist John Murray Cuddihy wrote a book called *No Offense* in which he discussed the phenomenon of "happen-to-be-Christians"—people who admit, if pressed, to being Christians but are not going to make a thing of it, and certainly not in public. Father Richard McBrien of Notre Dame notes that, in an interview, Avery Cardinal Dulles says he has a certain admiration for evangelical Protestants because they "preach the gospel loud and clear." Too often, complains McBrien, "loud and clear" means "in your face." He juxtaposes Dulles with Alan (O. J. Simpson) Dershowitz, who wrote a column in the *Los Angeles Times* complaining about the explicit mention of Jesus Christ in the prayers at President Bush's inauguration. Between Dulles and Dershowitz, McBrien comes down on the side of Dershowitz. Prayers at public events "should be inclusive rather than exclusive," and expressions of Christian particularism should be muted in this country, says McBrien, "even if the majority of its citizens happen to be Christian, just as we are." What do you mean "we," Father?

■ "For 1,100 years men have denied her existence. She is the legend that will not die." That is an offensively sexist statement, for it is not only men who are capable of historical knowledge and common sense. And anyone who knows anything about it knows that the legend of Pope Joan is a total fabrication. Nonetheless, Ballantine Books has published *Pope Joan* by Donna Woolfolkscross, and the promotion that contains the above quote informs us that the book is soon to be a major motion picture. For the record, the gist of the story is that in 1100 (other versions say 855) a woman in male disguise was elected to the chair of Peter and, after reigning more than two years, died while giving birth to a child during a procession to the Lateran. The tale was widely believed in the Middle Ages and again, it appears, in the age of credulity that is the beginning of the twenty-first century. For more on the fabulation of Pope Joan, see C. A. Patrides, *Premises and Motifs in Renaissance Thought and Literature* (1982). As it happens, and despite the publicity hype, Ms. Woolfolkscross also denies her existence, except in myth.

■ Many in the media followed the *New York Times* headline declaring that Bush won the presidency by "a single vote" of the U.S. Supreme Court. It now seems to be clear that he beat Gore in the Florida popular vote and thereby won the electoral college and the presidency. But I was earlier criticized for saying that *Bush v. Gore* did not prevail by "a single vote" in the Supreme Court but by five votes and, upon reflection, by seven votes. Judge Robert H. Bork writes on "The Florida Fiasco" in the *New Criterion*: "Though the decision appears to be five-to-four, seven justices agreed that a violation of equal protection was in progress and, since a valid recount could not have been completed even by December 18 [the meeting of the electoral college], Bush had, in practical effect, won seven-to-two." Precisely. Bork goes on to worry, however, that the employment of the equal protection clause may "federalize" all elections, and he wishes that a majority of judges would have agreed to arrive at the same result on the basis of Article II of the Constitution, which is limited to the election of the President of the U.S. Nonetheless, he writes that "*Bush v. Gore* was a valiant effort, legitimate in law, to rein runaway political passions and a lawless state court those passions had captured." Along the way, he surveys some of the hysterical partisan attacks on the decision by liberals who have for decades been using the courts to advance their political agendas. Bork is not terribly hopeful about checking this judicial usurpation of politics. "Constitutional law is like inside baseball: only those who play the game have any chance of real understanding." In the law schools and throughout the judiciary, he says, judicial usurpation is the orthodoxy taught and practiced. "That is part of the case for restrained judges: they will leave to the people what belongs to the people, whether the people know it or not."

■ You want to make the argument that most people agree with you. One way to do it is to get some research assistants to go out and do interviews with "ordinary" people, preferably middle class and fairly articulate. Twenty interviews will do, although a hundred makes it sound like really serious research. Then you excerpt from the interview transcripts what you want people to say and, voila! they say pretty much what you want them to say. Such was the "methodology" employed by Alan Wolfe, who heads Boston College's Center for Religion and American Life, to produce his book *One Nation After All*. Both the methodology and Wolfe's hostility to religion in

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public—the latter making his appointment by Boston College even curiouser—came in for scathing criticism in Gertrude Himmelfarb's *One Nation, Two Cultures.* Now Wolfe has a new book, *Moral Freedom.* The combination of fraudulence and fatuity is stunning. Wolfe's argument is that, having achieved political and economic freedom, Americans are now achieving moral freedom. He writes: "The ultimate implication of the idea of moral freedom . . . is that any form of higher authority has to tailor its commandments to the needs of real people." As Adam and Eve agreed. Or this: "Morality has long been treated as if it were a fixed star, sitting there far removed from the earthly concerns of real people. . . . In the contemporary world, however, people experience in their own lives many situations for which traditional conceptions of morality offer little guidance: What do you do when the pursuit of one virtue conflicts with another?" Homer, Augustine, Aquinas, Shakespeare, MacIntyre—and, yes, you too, Charlie Brown—call your offices immediately!

■ *America* magazine on a statement by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: "The statement of doctrinal principles drew heavily from the recent controversial document, *Dominus Jesus,* which strongly emphasized Christ as the unique savior and rejected the idea that 'one religion is as good as another.'" How controversial can you get?

■ Speaking in North Dakota, President Bush told an audience, "My job is to say to the moms and dads of America, 'Your most important job is to love your children with all your heart and all your soul.'" The Associated Press smelled a story in Bush's "controversial" statement and quotes three academics (from New York, Boston, and the University of Missouri) who say there is nothing in the Constitution that gives the President that job. *National Review Online* comments, "The AP should get credit for enterprise. Finding three people to criticize the President for saying parents should love their children can't have been easy." Actually, there is a story here. The only one we are to love with *all* our heart and *all* our soul is the Lord God. But that nuance—well, really more than a nuance—apparently escaped both the AP and *NRO.*

■ John DiIulio, a friend and contributor to these pages, now heads up President Bush's faith-based and community initiatives program. Months before Bush's election and his appointment, DiIulio reviewed in the *Public Interest* Charles Glenn's *The Ambiguous Embrace: Government and Faith-Based Schools and Social Agencies* (Princeton). DiIulio says that he agrees with the bet of Glenn and others that faith-based programs will more effectively meet human needs, but he cautiously notes the absence of studies confirming that hunch. "At this stage, the relative effectiveness of more strongly faith-based programs remains an informed hypothesis, not a settled fact." DiIulio ends his reflection with a number of questions about whether there will be "a stable base of religious people to volunteer in the poorest reaches of American society," whether "public funds will be mobilized to match private investments" in programs that work, and whether "a new presidential administration will adopt a decidedly faith-friendly posture toward such programs." He concludes, "Stay tuned—and, well, pray." Now he at least knows the answer to his last question. Continue to stay tuned, and pray.

■ Quite a row was stirred when the new president of the University of San Francisco, a school "in the Jesuit tradition," peremptorily disbanded the Saint Ignatius Institute, a much respected great books program that took the Catholic tradition very seriously indeed. About the same time, John J. DeGioia, a layman, was appointed president of Georgetown University, the flagship of Jesuit schools. Father Joseph O'Hare, Jesuit president of Fordham University, is among those who are outspoken in criticism of the decision, insisting that it is not true that are no Jesuits qualified for the post. "I can assure you that my successor at Fordham will be a Jesuit, unless the moon and stars take on a different alignment," he told the *National Catholic Reporter.* Fr. Brian McDermott, on the other hand, rector of Georgetown's Jesuit community, supports the appointment of DeGioia, noting that the largely lay board of directors has "full authority over the university." That was a change made years ago, he observes, and it means that "the Society of Jesus does not have that authority over Georgetown now and it hasn't since 1968." Apparently some people did not realize what they were doing more than thirty years ago. Fr. Charles Currie, president of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, states that "collaboration with the laity" has a long Jesuit tradition. The report continues, "Currie noted that non-Jesuits led Georgetown for a period in the late 1700s and early 1800s during a period when Jesuits were suppressed by the Vatican." So there. The Jesuit influence is as vibrant today as it was when there were no Jesuits.

■ Anglicans who identify themselves as conservative were generally disappointed by the recent meeting of the primates, meaning the chief bishops of the several national churches in the Anglican communion, at Camp Kanuga, North Carolina. They had hoped for some apostolic word on a number of controverted issues, notably the ordination of practicing

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homosexuals. Instead, the primates issued what I'm afraid does sound like a terribly vacuous statement. "We have together begun to learn, and invite every Anglican to learn with us, the deeper meaning of the Scriptures for life in the world today. . . . It is this constant renewal that strengthens our communion with each other. This is a special calling of the Anglican Communion amongst the Churches," and so forth. Representative of conservative disappointment is that of Father Michael Carreker, rector of St. John's Church in Savannah, Georgia: "In reply to the minority conservative bishops seeking some definitive and comfortable word on the issue, the majority of the primates simply acknowledged that 'alienated groups' exist within the church's own life. According to them these alienated people (that is us) are estranged from others because of changes in theology and practice. Moreover, according to the majority of prelates, these alienated people (that is us again) *believe* that the acceptance of homosexual activity and of the ordination of practicing homosexuals is unfaithful to the gospel of Christ. Notice the turn of phrase. What has been the moral theology of the Catholic Church, believed everywhere, always, and by all, and which we now believe as the truth of God and the sacred tradition of the Church, is said to be merely the subjective opinion of estranged people, *who are us.*" It is time, says Fr. Carreker, for orthodox Christians to understand that they live in exile within the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. This theme of "internal exile" has been a staple among orthodox Anglicans for a long time now. For those of more catholic conviction, it is a painfully awkward self-understanding, being in exile within a communion that is itself in exile. In the judgment of Fr. Carreker and many others, "the spirit of Kanuga" provides no relief.

■ Contra historians who have pointed out the risible inaccuracies and outrageous distortions in James Carroll's *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews* (see, for instance, Thomas F. X. Noble in FT, May), Robert S. Wistrich writes in *Commentary* that "Carroll does get most of his history pretty much right." He goes on to observe that Carroll seems not "to realize that satisfying some of his theological demands would involve not a reformation of the Church but its virtual dissolution." "Still," Wistrich writes, "despite occasional excesses, *Constantine's Sword* is marked by a basic integrity and honesty, and its intense style achieves often moving effects." Proposing the dissolution of the Church does seem a bit excessive. And the irony of Carroll's proposing for the Church what he claims the Church proposed for Judaism does seem to be somewhat underappreciated.

■ A part of the religious world that feels sorely neglected came in for some sympathetic attention at a Washington conference in March. The subject was "The Public Role of Mainline Protestantism: Is 'the Quiet Voice' Loud Enough?" The consensus, according to the *Christian Century*, was that evangelicals and Catholics are unfairly hogging the spotlight. James Wind of the Episcopalian Alban Institute, however, opined that mainliners are different: "There is a distinct care for the common good in mainline churches which our culture desperately needs." Sociologist Robert Wuthnow of Princeton thought mainline congregations were turning inward. "Members like the warm fuzzies they get working with their friends; they could care less about national issues." He was not suggesting that they should. As for real influence where it counts, apparently the old Protestant establishment is still very much alive. "The quiet way has been the historically normal way for the Church to proceed," says Wuthnow. "I think it's very similar to the way people who have influence in the community through business or other connections operate. . . . They have influence and they don't want their names in the headlines." Another conference participant contended that mainline disputes over gay ordination and the blessing of same-sex unions, although they may lead to loss of members, actually reflect the strength of mainline churches because they have "granted legitimacy to all sides of the debate." The *Century* reports that, following the conference although formally unrelated to it, the formation of a new coalition, named the Progressive Religious Partnership, was announced. It began two years ago when Episcopalian George Regas called on fellow clergy to "bring back a strong prophetic voice to the public square." The coalition includes Christian and Jewish leaders and works closely with Norman Lear's People for the American Way. The Washington announcement featured Senator Edward Kennedy. Following the injunction to bring back a prophetic voice, speakers included William Sloane Coffin, formerly of Yale, formerly of Riverside Church, formerly of SANE, formerly of the last dozen new coalitions for a progressive religious partnership. It is a tradition, and conservatives should be grateful that there are those who are determined not to let it die.

■ I am assured by Baptist friends that not too much should be made of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) recent announcement of a temporary suspension of official conversation with Roman Catholics. It is mainly a matter of program priorities, I am told, and there is no doubt that the SBC's 1994 resolution taking note of "Evangelicals and Catholics

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Together" and urging "ongoing Southern Baptist-Roman Catholic conversation while maintaining our Southern Baptist confession without compromise" is still very much in force. The temporary suspension of the official conversation, says a leading Southern Baptist, "makes 'Evangelicals and Catholics Together' all the more important." We will be proceeding on that understanding.

■ At the big bash held at the Gregorian University in Rome to celebrate the creation (cardinals are "created") of Avery Cardinal Dulles, I had fun toasting the honoree. When he received his red hat from the Pope, Cardinal Dulles fumbled and dropped it into the Pope's lap. I remarked, among other things, that Cardinal Dulles obviously wears his honors lightly. Okay, but it got a big laugh at the time. The editors of *Commonweal* take a more curmudgeonly line on the goings-on in Rome. "There's a place for pageantry and for grand ecclesiastical ritual," they write in an editorial titled "All Dressed Up," acknowledging that "even Jesus allowed himself to be anointed with precious oil." But he allowed it only once, mind you, and it is suggested that he did not really approve. Surely, the editors observe, Jesus wouldn't have stayed at a five star hotel in Rome the way Edward Cardinal Egan of New York did, even if it was on the house, as his stay was. Egan has yet to pass muster with the editors. He "has yet to convey much warmth or pastoral vision, let alone Christian mirth." (For Christian mirth, check out *Commonweal.*) It is noted that Egan "must act in the late Cardinal John O'Connor's considerable shadow." (Not that the editors had much use for O'Connor.) As for Cardinal Dulles, it is allowed that "A deep love for and devotion to the Church are evident in everything he writes." Nonetheless, "it is hard to suppress the suspicion" that his defense of "disputed papal teachings" was key to his being created a cardinal. Suspicion? There is no doubt that Dulles is the kind of old-fashioned Jesuit who believes he has a special responsibility to serve the papacy, and why should anyone be surprised that the Pope would likely honor a theologian whom he would like to see other theologians emulate? As for "disputed papal teachings," they are only that because the likes of *Commonweal* dispute them. Then the editorial moves in for the kill: "Finally, one aspect of the pageantry in Rome was even more conspicuous than the color red. Doubtless those made cardinals are persons of talent and great loyalty to the Church. They are also all, without exception, men." The editors undoubtedly checked out all forty-four names, watched the proceedings on television, and, sure enough, there were no exceptions. "Even should the priesthood remain closed to women, there is no possible theological or moral excuse for denying women a position of authority in the official structure of the Church," we are told. This overlooks the fact that, in order to make clear that the college of cardinals is not an alternative to, but is part of, the college of bishops, the rule is that cardinals be bishops, and therefore priests. *Commonweal*, one notes, is usually a great champion of episcopal collegiality. The editorial ends with this word to the new cardinals, "But congratulations, anyway, boys." I may be wrong, but I suspect that *Commonweal*'s editor, Margaret O'Brien Steinfels, would not take kindly to my saying, "Way to go, girl." So I won't. After all, hers is an office deserving of a measure of respect.

■ This is a beautiful book—beautifully conceived, beautifully executed, and rare in the beauty of its pastoral and theological sensibilities. It is by Richard Lischer, professor of homiletics at Duke Divinity School, and is titled *Open Secrets* (Doubleday, 256 pp., $23.95). There has not appeared for a very long time such a compelling story of Christian ministry. Do not be put off by the occasionally too breezy style or the PC opinions on this and that; the former is only occasional and the latter are strictly by-the-way asides that have no bearing on the tale that Lischer tells. The tale is about his three years as pastor of Cana Lutheran Church in a little German no-place hamlet near Alton, Illinois. He and his wife Tracy (he with his newly minted Ph.D. from England, and thinking himself quite God's gift to the Church) could not have been more disappointed or more out of place with this rustic congregation so drearily set in its ways. Slowly, awkwardly, and with many a misstep, Lischer came to see in these people the face of Christ. The last phrase is, of course, from Georges Bernanos' *Diary of a Country Priest*, and I can offer no higher praise of this book than to say that at times it explores heights and depths of Christian ministry in a manner worthy of Bernanos. With a literary grace that never loses touch with the thus and so-ness of everyday lives, Lischer reveals to the reader, as was revealed to him, the presence of Christ in his body. It is not the whole of the truth, but it is a too easily forgotten part of the truth, to say that all Christianity is local. This people, this place, these wounds, these healings, these questions left, it seems, forever hanging. The book caught my attention because Lischer was a pastor in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, which I also once was, and graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis, which is my alma mater as well. But these personal connections, interesting though they are to me, are not the reason for my strong recommendation of *Open Secrets*. I could only feel sorry for a Catholic priest or a minister of any

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denomination who does not resonate to Lischer's discovery of the mystery of Christ in the ordinary. And it is far from being a book for clergy alone. Every Christian who, looking honestly at the ragtag company of disciples that is every local church, has ever asked, "Is that all there is?" should read this book and be opened to the wonder of the One who meets us in others who are—in the words of Mother Teresa—Christ in distressing disguise. *Open Secrets* is a rare achievement.

■ Father Fred Kammer, head of the national coordinating office of Catholic Charities, writes in *America* that we should "avoid polemics" in discussing the Bush proposal for "faith-based" initiatives in social policy. He then proceeds to attack, inter alia, Michael Novak, George Will, and your writer, noting that the leadership of the bishops "in explaining Catholic social teaching has never been accepted by those on the extreme right." Oh, that hurts. But how are those of us who don't want to be part of "the extreme right" to know what authentic Catholic teaching is? Fr. Kammer has a ready answer: "Catholic Charities are really surrogates for the U.S. bishops." It's really very simple. Catholic Charities speaks for the bishops and Fr. Kammer speaks for Catholic Charities. What part of that don't you understand?

■ Longtime readers know that we are relentless in tracking the names that people give their children. Here, from AOL's "Government Guide," are, in order, the most popular names for children born in the first eight months of 2000, based on Social Security applications. For boys: Michael, Jacob, Matthew, Joseph, Christopher, Nicholas, Andrew, William, Joshua, and Daniel. For girls: Hannah, Emily, Madison, Elizabeth, Alexis, Sarah, Taylor, Lauren, Jessica, and Ashley. There are actually three biblical names in the top ten for girls, which is an uptick from previous years. But the constant is that, at least in choosing names, boys are taken ever more seriously.

■ A hospital chaplain reports seeing this entry on a patient's chart: "Catholic minister read the Last Rights to patient." When all the others turned out not to be inalienable after all.

■ It says here that there are "surrendered wives" groups sprouting up all over the country. They are composed of women who have bought the argument of Laura Doyle, author of *The Surrendered Wife*, that they and their men will be much happier if they, the wives, let their husbands dominate, or at least think they are dominating. "Yes, dear, you're right." "You know best, dear." It's called Yes-dearing your way to a happy marriage. The odd thing is that the book receives appreciative attention from prestige media such as the *New York Times*, while Christian ideas such as male headship, or mutual subordination, or even the husband as servant-leader are the object of outraged feminist scorn. But maybe it's not so odd. To judge by the account in the *Times*, the way of surrender in *The Surrendered Wife* is proposed in terms of manipulation, power plays, and self-serving deceit. We are assured that it has nothing to do with self-surrender, as in love. Oh well, that's all right then.

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Sources: Philip Gleason on Catholic assimilation, *Logos*, Fall 2000. William Dean on neoconservatives and public theology, *Religion and American Culture*, Winter 2000.

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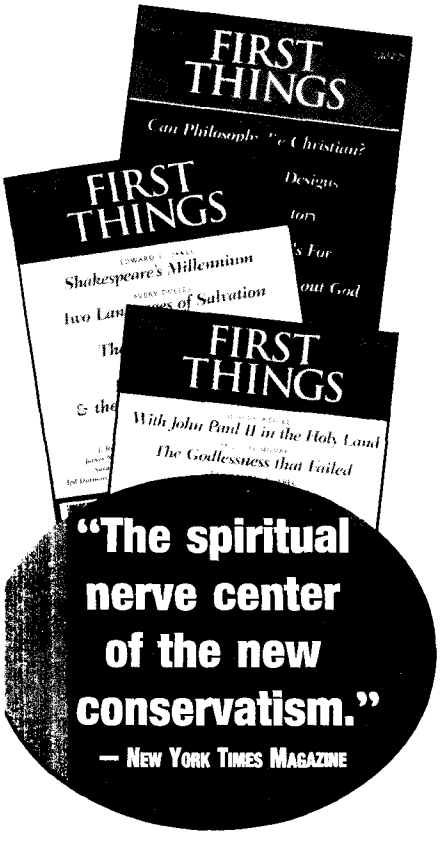

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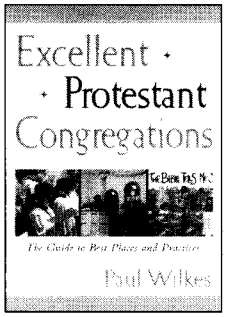

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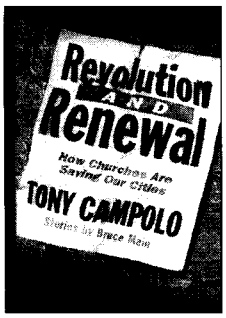

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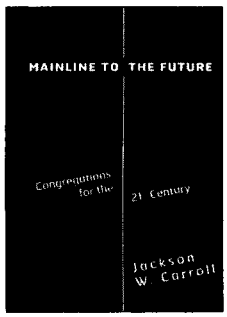

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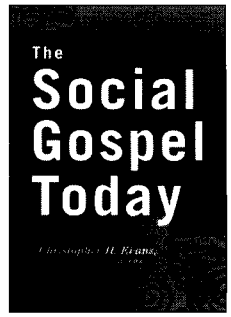

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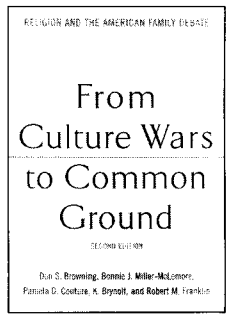

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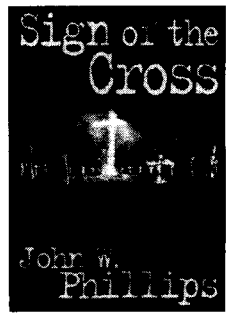

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